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Franklin's Economic Views

BY

LEWIS J. CAREY

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1928
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FIRST EDITION

Preface

THE writer has been exceedingly fortunate in having had access to the valuable collection of Frankliniana in the private library of William Smith Mason at Evanston, Illinois. It is impossible to express adequately the debt of gratitude he owes Mr. Mason for his many acts of kindness while he carried on researches at his library. He also wishes to express his deep obligation to Mr. Georg Edward, librarian at the Mason Library, for assistance in the preparation of the bibliographies and for many suggestions on points of detail as well as for the minute care he has taken in verifying references and examining the proof sheets; to Mr. George Simpson Eddy, editor and translator of Franklin's imprint of Gargaz's Project of Universal and Perpetual Peace, for many valuable suggestions, for his kind assistance in the solution of several perplexing problems and for reading the entire manuscript before it was sent to the press; to the Reverend William Augustine Bolger, C.S.C., Ph.B., of the University of Notre Dame, for reading the chapter "Franklin's Influence on Adam Smith"; to Professor Bernard Faÿ of the University of Clermont-Ferrand, France, for several helpful criticisms and suggestions; to Miss Helen Thompson of the staff of the Mason Library and to Mrs. H. B. Wilkinson for

their careful preparation of the manuscript for the press.

Chapter VIII, "Franklin's Services and Interest in the Promotion of Agriculture, Silk Culture and Botany," is not suggested by or in consonance with the title of the book; but, in a sense, is related to it. In preparing this chapter the writer made considerable use of the Edward Lee Greene and the Julius Arthur Nieuland Collections of scarce eighteenth century editions of works on botany at the library of the University of Notre Dame. The last chapter, entitled, "Miscellanea," comprises subjects of unrelated nature, several of which are outside the field of economics.

Lewis J. Carey

Notre Dame, Indiana
July 23, 1928.

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Chapter I

PAPER MONEY

FRANKLIN was born and spent his youth (1706-1723) in Boston, the seat of the colonial government of Massachusetts, the first of the British colonies in America to issue bills of credit (1690). The interest of the citizens of the colony in the currency question is shown by the fact that at least thirty pamphlets dealing with this problem were printed in the colony and circulated in Boston in the period from 1682 until 1721.[1] Seventeen pamphlets on the subject of paper currency are known to have appeared in Massachusetts during 1720 and 1721. And Franklin's brother, James, to whom he was apprenticed to learn the printing trade in 1718, published two, which discussed paper money, one in 1720, and the other in 1721. Benjamin Franklin probably had a hand in the printing of these pamphlets and seems to have obtained ideas on the subject from them.

The Reverend Edward Wigglesworth appears to have been the author[2] of the pamphlet entitled *A Letter from one in the Country to his Friend in Boston, containing some Remarks upon a late pamphlet*

[1] A. M. Davis, *Colonial Currency Reprints*, Vols. I and II, contain reprints of thirty pamphlets which appeared in Massachusetts during this period.
[2] Ibid., I, 422-444.

. . ." [1] which was printed by James Franklin in 1720. The pamphlet, as the title indicates, is in the form of a letter which bears the date, April 23, 1720. The author advocates remedying the money shortage in the colony by establishing a private bank to issue bills on the security of real estate mortgaged to the bank. He asserts that the shortage of metallic currency was due to an unfavorable balance of trade with European countries. Franklin later also favored issuing government loan-bills on realty mortgaged to colonial governments, and one may feel fairly certain in stating that he was familiar with the fact that Massachusetts emitted paper currency of this kind in 1714, 1716 and 1721. The assertion that the shortage of metallic currency in the American colonies was the result of an unfavorable balance of trade with Great Britain is also one which frequently appears in Franklin's writings on paper money.

The author of the second pamphlet on paper money which was printed by James Franklin in 1721 was probably Thomas Paine,[2] and is entitled, *A Discourse, shewing, That the real first Cause of the Straits and difficulties of this Province of the Massachusetts Bay, is it's Extravagancy & not Paper Money. . . .*[3] The burden of the writer's argument is that the shortage of hard money in Massachusetts was the result of the colonists' extravagant consumption of foreign com-

[1] A pamphlet written by John Colman entitled, *The Distressed State of the Town of Boston. . . .* Boston, 1720.

[2] Paine was a Harvard graduate who first entered the ministry but later abandoned the profession to enter business. He published his pamphlet under the pseudonym, "Philopatria."

[3] Printed in full in A. M. Davis, op. cit., II, 280-301.

modities, which caused the balance of trade to be unfavorable to the province. Franklin, too, was later fond of emphasizing the consumption of foreign luxuries as one of the principal causes of the shortage of metallic currency in the American colonies. He also later favored the emission of loan-bills on realty mortgaged to colonial governments, a method of issue which this pamphleteer advocated only as a last resort to remedy a serious currency deficiency.

In these two pamphlets may be found ideas on the paper money question similar to those which Franklin later expressed in his writings. He probably also read some of the other pamphlets which appeared during the currency controversies in Massachusetts, and certainly heard discussions of the paper currency question at Boston. As has been pointed out, he certainly was familiar, in a general way, with Massachusetts' experience with paper money and undoubtedly knew that the Assembly had authorized the issue of bills on the basis of real estate which was mortgaged to the colonial government.

Franklin left Boston and went to Philadelphia in the fall of 1723. In the spring of that year the Assembly of Pennsylvania issued that colony's first paper money (March 22, 1723). As early as 1717 the Assembly received "The Petition of sundry Persons, praying an Alteration may be made in the Currency of Money, and that Country Produce should be made current Pay at a certain Price." [1] Again on

[1] *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1753), II, 227.

January 2, 1723, the same body received a petition from freeholders and inhabitants of the city and county of Philadelphia stating "That they were sensibly aggrieved in their Estates and Dealings, to the great Loss and growing Ruin of themselves, and evident Decay of this Province in general, from want of a Medium to buy and sell with, and praying for a Paper Currency."[1] It was in response to these and numerous other similar petitions that the Assembly issued paper money as a remedy for the currency shortage.

Francis Rawle, an English Quaker, who published the first pamphlet[2] in Pennsylvania advocating the issue of paper currency, was the chairman of the committee of the Assembly which was selected to draw up the colony's first paper currency act. And the act in general embodied the suggestions as to the methods of issue which he made in his pamphlet; eleven thousand pounds of the bills were chiefly loaned to persons on real estate which was mortgaged to the province's loan-office to twice the value of the amount issued, and four thousand pounds were sunk by taxes. The bills were legal tender for all debts and bore interest at the rate of five per cent per annum. Loans of bills ran for eight years and one-eighth of the principal, with accrued interest, was payable to the loan-office each year.

The act of March 22, 1723, was followed by another act, December 12, 1723, authorizing an issue

[1] *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1753) II, 335.

[2] *Some Remedies proposed for Restoring the sunk Credit of the Province of Pennsylvania: with Some Remarks on its Trade.* (Philadelphia, 1721.)

of 30,000 pounds of paper money. A third act, passed on March 5, 1726, made provision for a further emission of 10,000 pounds. The total amount of this currency in circulation, however, remained at forty-five thousand pounds. The first bills of the year 1723, as stated above, were to expire in eight years (1731). In 1728, three years before the date of their expiration, however, agitation was begun both for and against a further issue of paper money. Franklin's interest in the question may be best described in his own words:

"About this time there was a cry among the people for more paper money, only fifteen thousand pounds being extant in the province, and that soon to be sunk. The wealthy inhabitants oppos'd any addition, being against all paper currency, from an apprehension that it would depreciate, as it had done in New England, to the prejudice of all creditors. We had discuss'd this point in our Junto,[1] where I was on the side of an addition, being persuaded that the first small sum struck in 1723 had done much good by increasing the trade, employment, and number of inhabitants in the province, and since I now saw all the old houses inhabited and many new ones building: whereas I remembered well, that when I first walk'd about the streets of Philadelphia, eating my roll, I saw most of the houses in Walnut Street, between Second and Front streets, with bills on their doors, "To be let"; and many likewise in Chestnut-street and other

[1] The Junto was a society which Franklin organized among his youthful friends at Philadelphia for the discussion of civic problems.

streets, which made me then think the inhabitants of the city were deserting it one after another.

"Our debates possess'd me so fully of the subject, that I wrote and printed an anonymous pamphlet on it, entitled "*The Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency.*" It was well receiv'd by the common people in general; but the rich men dislik'd it, for it increas'd and strengthen'd the clamor for more money, and they happening to have no writers among them that were able to answer it, their opposition slacken'd, and the point was carried by a majority in the House. My friends there, who conceiv'd I had been of some service, thought fit to reward me by employing me in printing the money; a very profitable jobb and a great help to me. This was another advantage gain'd by my being able to write." [1]

Franklin's keen interest in the paper money question in Pennsylvania in 1728 was largely due to the fact that he had formed a partnership with Hugh Meredith in the printing business at Philadelphia (1728), and by publishing his pamphlet, *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency*, hoped to gain favor with the paper money party so that if an act to emit more bills were passed by the Assembly he might secure the printing of the issue. As a reward for his influence in securing the passage of the act of May 10, 1729, to emit 30,000 pounds of paper money, he was given the job of printing the bills. Through his friend, Andrew Hamilton, he received the printing of the paper

[1] Franklin (Smyth), I, 306-307.

money of the county of Newcastle.[1] Hamilton also secured for Franklin the printing of the laws and votes of the Pennsylvania Assembly which the latter continued to do as long as he remained in the printing business. The printing of paper money was especially lucrative as Franklin himself admits. The reports of expenditures in the Votes and Proceedings of the Assembly of Pennsylvania show that he received over 1000 pounds from 1731 to 1752 for printing and supplying the paper for the province's paper money. He also made considerable sums of money printing the bills of credit for the neighboring province of New Jersey.

A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency, Franklin's longest essay on paper money, first appeared in the *Maryland Gazette* (December 17, 1728), and later as a pamphlet printed by himself at Philadelphia (April 3, 1729). Although this paper was written when he was only twenty-two and despite the fact that he derived some economic theories from Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662), it was by far the ablest and most original treatise that had been written on the subject up to 1728 and was probably the most widely read work on paper currency that appeared in colonial America.

Franklin begins his argument for paper money in this essay [2] with the general assertion that "*There is a certain proportionate Quantity of Money requisite to*

[1] One of the so-called "lower counties" of Pennsylvania which, although under the Governor of Pennsylvania, had a measure of self-government.

[2] Printed in full, Franklin (Smyth), II, 133-155.

carry on the Trade of a Country freely and currently; More than which would be of no Advantage in Trade, and Less, if much less, exceedingly detrimental to it." He states that laws against usury can not prevent payment of high rates of interest when money is scarce, for men who need money badly will find ways to evade these laws.[1] A high rate of interest is injurious to a country in the following ways: 1. It will cause prices of land to be low because men with money will refrain from investing in lands when they can get greater returns by lending it.[2] 2. High interest rates will also discourage shipping and foreign commerce. Men would prefer safe investments on land rather than hazard their money in risky investments in ships and cargoes which were liable to be lost at sea. He states that the traders of a country which had plenty of money would have a distinct advantage over those of another country where money was scarce and rates of interest consequently high. A "plentiful Currency," he claims, would cause more investments to be made in land, an enhancement of prices of land, and would also generally stimulate commerce.

He then asserts that "*Want of Money in a Country reduces the price of that Part of its Produce which is used in Trade.*" If there is insufficient money in a country for the purposes of trade the result will be a decreased demand for, and a consequent fall in the

[1] Compare Franklin's statement with Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (Third Edition, 1685), p. 29.

[2] He does not say what borrowers would do with borrowed money. He probably thought that borrowed money would be used in the purchase of goods for current consumption.

price of, those staple commodities which land produced. And if the products of land do not sell and bring low prices land will decrease in value and improvement of lands will abate. A "plentiful Currency," however, will cause "*the Trading Produce to bear a good Price,*" and a greater demand for the products of land on account of the higher prices they would bring.[1] Furthermore, higher prices will stimulate agricultural production, will enhance land values and will cause more people to engage in husbandry.

Franklin further claims that ship-building in Pennsylvania had increased due to the province's emission of paper money, and that it would continue to increase if trade were promoted by providing a "plentiful Currency." He very erroneously concluded that an increase of foreign trade and of ship-building in Pennsylvania had been promoted and would continue to be promoted solely by the issue of paper money. Many other influences besides that of paper currency naturally contributed to the growth of these branches of industry.

He continues stating that "*Want of Money in a Country discourages Labouring and Handicrafts Men (which are the chief Strength and Support of a People) from coming to settle in it, and induces many that are settled to leave the Country, and seek Entertainment and Employment in other Places, where they can be better paid.*" Generally speaking this assertion is probably true; but certainly the soundness

[1] In this passage Franklin erroneously thought that high prices would result in an increased demand for commodities.

of a country's currency would be as important an inducement to immigration as the abundance of its currency. Franklin states that if laborers leave a country or refrain from coming to it, the decline of population would cause a decreased demand for and a subsequent decline in the price of land. On the other hand, a "plentiful Currency" would cause greater immigration and a greater demand for land and a consequent rise in land values. An increase in population would also cause a greater demand for houses which would result in raising house rents and in the building of more houses.

His fourth proposition claims that "*Want of Money in such a Country as ours, occasions a greater Consumption of English and European Goods, in Proportion to the Number of People, than there would otherwise be.*" Employers of labor, lacking money with which to pay wages, would force their employees to take pay partly in English and foreign goods which they might not need and which they could not sell without suffering losses. This practice would encourage people to indulge in foreign luxuries. "A plentiful Currency," however, would put a stop to this practice and would cause a smaller consumption of European goods in proportion to the population. This would make the balance of trade more nearly in favor of Pennsylvania. The decrease in the per capita consumption of foreign goods would not injure the business of merchants who deal in them because an increase in population, due to immigration (if there

were plenty of money), would increase the total amount of foreign goods consumed.

The following classes, in Franklin's opinion, would probably object to an increase in the amount of paper money in Pennsylvania: men who, for fear of loss or from lack of courage, prefer to lend their money to others at usurious rates rather than to invest it in trade for themselves; and those who have large sums of money and who desire to invest it in land. These men, Franklin thought, would go on loaning money at high rates of interest. Their wealth would continually increase. They would at first oppose the increase of paper money in order to cause the price of lands to fall. Impoverished borrowers and land owners, for want of money and because of the slackened sale of products of the land, eventually would be forced to sell their lands at low prices. When possessors of large sums of money had bought up all the lands they could purchase at these low prices they would then favor an increase of the amount of the province's paper money in order to increase the value of their lands. Lawyers and people who were connected with the business of courts would also oppose an increase of paper money because plenty of money would enable debtors to pay their creditors and hence there would be fewer lawsuits. All people who were dependent on these previously mentioned classes or who were influenced by them would also oppose an issue of paper money.

The people in favor of an increase of the amount

of paper money would be "those who are Lovers of Trade, and delight to see Manufactures encouraged"; also those who had the proprietaries' interests at heart.[1]

He next considers "*Whether a large Addition to our Paper Currency will make it sink in Value very much.*" He defines the uses of money as a medium of exchange and the measure of values. Commercial countries of the world have used gold, and especially silver, as media of exchange, but the value of these metals varies with the supply, "therefore it seems requisite to fix upon Something else, more proper to be made a *Measure of Values*, and this I take to be *Labour*." He then gives a statement of the "labor-time" cost theory of value which was taken from Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662).

Franklin explains the decline of the value of gold and silver by the fact that the supply of these metals had been greatly increased since the discovery of great quantities of them in the western hemisphere. He explains the method of issuing the "Bills of Credit" used in Europe, and shows how these could not decline in value unless the solid funds deposited in banks on which they were issued also declined in value. He correctly stated the utility of banks of deposit in increasing the amount of the circulating capital of a

[1] The Penns were the proprietaries of Pennsylvania and owned extensive tracts of land, proceeds from the sale of which provided them with large incomes.

country. But he did not see that there was a difference between the metallic funds on which European "Bills of Credit" were issued and the lands on which American paper currency was emitted; the former were readily convertible while the latter was not.

Franklin claims that bills issued upon the security of land in America would not decline in value because the value of lands on which the bills were emitted was continually rising due to the increased demand for land by a growing population: "But as our People increase exceedingly, and will be further increased, as I have before shewn, by the Help of a large Addition to our Currency, and as Land in consequence is continually rising, So, in case no Bills are emitted but what are upon Land Security, the Money-Acts in every Part punctually enforced and executed, the Payments of Principal and Interest being duly and strictly required, and the Principal *bonâ fide* sunk according to Law, it is absolutely impossible such Bills should ever sink below their first Value, or below the Value of the Land, on which they are founded."

He distinguishes between "Money as Bullion" and "Money as a Currency": "*Money as Bullion, or as Land, is valuable by so much labour as it costs to procure that Bullion or Land. Money, as Currency, has an Additional Value by so much Time and Labour as it saves in the Exchange of Commodities.*" He states that an overissue of currency "will have no Effect towards making the Currency as a Currency of less Value than when there was but enough; because the

Overplus will not be used in Trade, but be some other way disposed of." [1]

Franklin goes on to inquire what rate of interest bills of credit issued upon land security should bear. He defines "the Natural Standard of Usury" in almost the same words as Sir William Petty does in his *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions:* [2] "And this appears to be, where the Security is undoubted, at least the Rent of so much Land as the Money lent will buy." He advocates that bills issued by the loan-office in Pennsylvania should bear four per cent interest.[3] He explains the depreciation of the paper money in New England and South Carolina by saying that it was not issued with the same prudence or on as good security as that of Pennsylvania.

Franklin's pamphlet may now be severely criticized for advocating what proved to be a most pernicious economic evil. Experience has shown that the basis of a monetary system which fluctuates in value is undesirable, and that silver and gold have been the least variable. American paper money in colonial times invariably depreciated owing to overissues. The debtor class always clamored for more and was never satisfied. Depreciation of this currency caused holders to sustain heavy losses. English creditors, especially, suffered financial losses by accepting it

[1] He was apparently trying to conceal in this passage a fact which he must have known, namely, that overissues of paper currency would cause it to depreciate.

[2] Compare Franklin (Smyth), II, 150, 151, with Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (3rd Edition, London, 1685), 28.

[3] The bills authorized by the Act of March 22, 1723, bore interest at the rate of five per cent per annum.

when it was legal tender. The well-known principle of Gresham's "law" operated in the colonies, metallic currency disappearing whenever paper money came into circulation.

In this paper Franklin employed the Mercantilist notion of the significance of a favorable balance of trade, and like the Mercantilists attached a much greater value to money than he did to other forms of capital. He made no distinction between money and other capital instruments, or between the total amount of money in a country and the amount available for loaning. Using the deductive method (a marked characteristic of most of his economic writings), he began his argument for paper money with generally accepted postulates, and from these he reasoned to far-fetched and untenable conclusions. His paper was written as a special plea for paper money, and on that account only occasionally approaches a truly scientific spirit of inquiry.

On January 29, 1730, Franklin and his partner, Hugh Meredith, were appointed by the Pennsylvania Assembly to print the minutes.[1] The partnership with Meredith was soon dissolved but Franklin continued to be the public printer of the province until 1764. As has been pointed out, the printing of paper money was profitable business, and Franklin probably used his influence to secure the passage of bills for the issue of paper money on that account. Mercenary motives, however, were not the sole cause of his

[1] *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania*, III, 103.

advocacy of paper money. He believed in the utility of this form of currency and advocated its issue all his life.

Franklin was made clerk of the Assembly in 1736; on August 13, 1751, he became a member of the Assembly from Philadelphia, continuing in office until 1764.[1] As a member of the Assembly he was the foremost leader of the anti-proprietary party and the leading advocate of paper money. He was a member of many committees to draft bills for the issue of paper money and to answer governors' messages to the Assembly in which the former refused to give their assent to bills for that purpose.

In 1751 Parliament passed an act restraining the New England colonies from issuing legal-tender notes. English merchants sustained heavy losses by accepting this kind of currency from debtors in New England, and the Board of Trade became more hostile to the issue of paper money by the Assemblies of the other colonies. Governor Hamilton of Pennsylvania, for example, was bonded by the Crown for 2000 Pounds which he was to forfeit in the event he gave his assent to a bill for the further emission of money.[2]

Regardless of the British government's hostility towards the further issue of paper money, the Assembly of Pennsylvania desired to increase the amount of it in the province. On August 20, 1752, a committee of the Assembly, of which Franklin was chair-

[1] He was annually elected to the Assembly 1757-1762 while he was in England as the colony's agent.

[2] B. A. Konkle, *George Bryan and the Constitution of Pennsylvania*, p. 28.

man, rendered a report based on the tax books and the accounts which the Inspector General of Customs had submitted to Parliament in 1748. Basing its report on these public records the committee concluded that the province had greatly increased in population and in the amount of its exports and imports since 1723 when the first paper money was issued.[1]

Franklin again served on a committee which, February 6, 1754, submitted an elaborate report to the Assembly on the quantity of paper money and on the state of trade in Pennsylvania.[2] This report like the one made in 1752 was probably largely composed by Franklin. Both reports are partisan arguments for more paper money and are characterized by specious reasoning for the purpose of convincing the Governor that more paper money was urgently needed by the province. According to the report of 1754 the value of Pennsylvania's imports had risen from 15,992 pounds in 1723 to 190,917 pounds in 1751. Exports of wheat, flour, bread and flaxseed from 1729 to 1731 amounted on the average to a little more than 60,000 pounds annually, whereas in 1751, the total value of these commodities exported had risen to 187,457 pounds. The value of exports was thus shown to have more than trebled in twenty years while imports had increased in value nearly twelvefold from 1729 to 1751; yet the province was said to have the same amount of paper money in 1754 as it had in 1729. Obviously if these figures were correct there was an

[1] *Votes and Proceedings*, IV, 225-228.
[2] Ibid., 273-274.

insufficient quantity of money for purposes of trade in 1754 especially since the balance of trade was unfavorable to Pennsylvania. To infer, however, as the committee did in its report, August, 1752, that an increase of population and increased prosperity of trade had resulted solely from issues of paper money was patently an erroneous conclusion.

The refusal of Governor Denny to assent to the taxation of proprietary lands the same as the estates of the people provoked such opposition to the proprietary government that the Assembly, February 3, 1757, appointed Franklin as colonial agent to England. He was commissioned to secure redress of the province's grievances and to induce the Crown to make Pennsylvania a Royal Colony. On April 17, 1759, the Assembly passed an act, which received the Governor's assent, for the issue of 100,000 pounds of bills of credit. Franklin and his assistant, Robert Charles, were instrumental in influencing the Board of Trade to approve of this measure. In June, 1760, the Proprietaries finally consented to allow the Assembly to tax their lands, and in 1762 Franklin returned to America. He served as speaker of the Assembly from May 26 until September 22, 1764, and one of his first acts in this capacity was to secure Governor Penn's assent to the act of May 30, 1764, for the emission of 55,000 pounds of bills of credit to be sunk by a tax on all estates both real and personal in the province.[1]

[1] See Franklin's letter to Colonel Henry Bouquet, Philadelphia, August 16, 1764. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 254. In this letter he refers to the act of May 30, 1764, as "the £60,000 Act."

The proprietary party, which Franklin had always opposed, prevented his re-election to the Assembly (Oct. 1, 2, 1764). The popular party, however, was in the majority when the Assembly met and on October 26, 1764, he was again appointed colonial agent to Great Britain.[1]

In 1764 Parliament passed another Restraining Act by which all the American colonies were forbidden to issue legal-tender bills of credit.[2] Parliament was influenced to pass the act by the "Lords of Trade Representation to the King" (February 9, 1764) which was submitted by Lord Hillsborough, President of the Board of Trade.[3] This report gave as reasons for favoring an act to prohibit the issue of legal-tender notes in the American colonies that paper money carried gold and silver out of the colonies; that merchants who traded with America had sustained financial losses by it; that restriction of issues had benefited New England;[4] that every medium of exchange should have intrinsic value; that debtors in the colonial assemblies had issued it to defraud creditors, and that even in the middle colonies where the credit of paper money had been best supported the bills had never kept their nominal value but had depreciated whenever the quantity had been increased.

Franklin assisted "Governor" Thomas Pownall in

[1] *Votes and Proceedings*, V, 383.

[2] Currency Act, 1764 (4 George III, Cap. 34), Ruffhead's *Statutes at Large*, IX, 199.

[3] This report is printed in full in *New Jersey Archives* (First Series), IX, 405-424.

[4] The New England colonies were restrained from issuing legal-tender notes by an act of 1751.

drawing up a plan for a general loan-office to be established by the British government for the emission of a general paper currency in all the American colonies. The bills were to be printed in England; a loan-office established in each colony to issue them on adequate security; they were to run for ten years, bearing five per cent interest per annum; one-tenth of the sum borrowed was to be repaid to the loan-office annually, with accrued interest; and they were to be legal tender. Pownall and Franklin proposed this plan to the English Government in 1764, 1765 and 1766.[1] In a letter to the Committee of Correspondence of the Assembly of Pennsylvania, London, April 12, 1766, Franklin stated that he had drawn a bill for the repeal of the Restraining Act of 1764 for one of the members of Parliament.[2] In the same year he proposed a plan to Lord Grenville for a general colonial loan-office, like the one in Pennsylvania, for the emission of a uniform paper currency for all the American colonies.[3] On February 13, 1767, he presented a paper on *The Legal Tender of Paper Money in America* to one of the Ministry. In this paper he stated that if the colonies were not allowed to issue legal-tender notes there was no way in which they could retain hard money except by boycotting English goods.[4]

[1] Franklin (Sparks), II, note, pp. 353-354.
[2] *Penn. Mag. Hist. and Biog.* (1881), V, 353-354.
[3] Unpublished letter of Franklin to Joseph Galloway, London, Oct. 11, 1766. Clements Library.
[4] The Mason Library has a copy of this manuscript. Mason No. 327.

Franklin's paper, *Remarks and Facts concerning American Paper Money* (March 11, 1767), was written at the request of English merchants who desired his opinion on the Lords' of Trade report which Lord Hillsborough had circulated among them. He refuted the statement in this report to the effect that paper money carried gold and silver out of the colonies with the assertion that the unfavorable balance of trade with England carried these metals out of America.[1] He asserted that merchants trading in America had not sustained losses by accepting paper money except during the period of the colonial wars with Spain and France and then only in South Carolina, Virginia and New England. He claimed that merchants trading with the middle colonies (New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) had never suffered any losses from the paper money of these colonies but had, on the contrary, been great gainers by it because bills for goods were always paid for with this money at its sterling value as rated in England.[2] He showed that the New England colonies had small need of paper money because the fisheries there gave them an article for export which brought metallic currency from England, Spain, and Portugal. Virginia and Maryland also had tobacco to export, the sale of which brought in foreign currency. But the

[1] The balance of trade was in England's favor at the close of each decade from 1740 to 1780. H. A. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (New York, 1924), p. 111.

[2] British merchants actually did suffer financial losses because they overrated its sterling value.

middle colonies had no staple exports such as fish and tobacco, and therefore required paper money to satisfy their currency needs. He also stated that some of the New England colonies could not pay their debts in 1767 because of a lack of currency.

In reply to the statement of the Lords' of Trade report, "*That every Medium of Trade should have an intrinsic Value, which Paper Money has not,*" he answered that since North America had no mines and could not keep precious metals in her colonies because of an unfavorable balance of trade due to the consumption of foreign goods, it was necessary to have paper money in lieu of metallic currency. He pointed out that the British government by the act of coinage made three-pennyworth of silver pass for sixpence legal tender.

In answer to the statement "*That Debtors, in the Assemblies, make paper Money with fraudulent Views,*" he replied that placing the restriction of issue on all the assemblies punished the innocent ones together with the guilty ones. He refuted the statement "*That in the Middle Colonies, where the Paper Money has been best supported, the Bills have never kept to their nominal Value in Circulation, but have constantly depreciated, to a certain Degree, whenever the Quantity has been increased,*" with the assertion that the Spanish milled dollar had been rated in New York paper money at 8s., and at 7s. 6d. in the paper money of Pennsylvania, and that the paper money of these provinces had continued to maintain its value at these rates for nearly forty years even though the

amounts had been increased by successive issues.[1]

After reviewing the various schemes which had been proposed and tried for the emission of paper money not a legal tender Franklin concluded that, "on the whole, no Method has hitherto been found to establish a Medium of Trade in lieu of Money, equal in all its Advantages to Bills of Credit, funded on Sufficient Taxes for discharging it, or on Land Security, of double the Value for repaying it, at the End of the Term; and in the mean time made a GENERAL LEGAL TENDER."

Lord Hillsborough, the President of the Board of Trade, read Franklin's *Remarks and Facts concerning American Paper Money* with great interest but was not convinced that it would be beneficial to England or her colonies to allow the latter to issue legal-tender bills. Franklin then induced a number of British merchants to petition for the repeal of the Currency Act of 1764, but all his efforts to secure a repeal or a modification of the act were fruitless. In 1769 he ceased trying to induce the British government to change its attitude with reference to American paper money. He wrote to Joseph Galloway, March 9,

[1] C. W. Macfarlane in an article, Pennsylvania Paper Currency, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* VIII, 50-126, shows that Franklin's assertion was substantially correct and especially accurate with reference to the period before 1750. After this date, owing to a great increase in the export demand, the prices of wheat, corn, flour, beef and pork advanced about 100 per cent; but the prices of other commodities do not show a similar increase. The paper currency of Pennsylvania maintained its value because it was issued on good security, against installment mortgages running from eight to sixteen years. Adam Smith and David Hume were both familiar with the stability of Pennsylvania paper money and both probably obtained information about it from Franklin personally or from his writings.

1769, saying that if the people of Pennsylvania practiced frugality and industry they would make money as plentiful among them as the Assembly might have done had it acquired the right from Parliament to issue legal-tender notes.[1]

On his return to America Franklin was elected a member of the second Continental Congress, May 6, 1775. The Congress had no power to levy taxes on the colonies. The colonists had developed great sensitiveness on the subject of the British government's right to tax them and probably would have resented an attempt by Congress to do so. The great problem which confronted Congress was financing the Revolution. Borrowing from the colonies was out of the question, for the colonial treasuries were nearly empty. The issue of paper money therefore seemed to be the only available means of defraying immediate expenses. One colony after another began to emit bills of credit, and on June 22, 1775, the Continental Congress resolved to make its first issue to the amount of $2,000,000.

It would be a matter of interest to know which members of Congress were instrumental in securing the passage of this measure, but available sources fail to shed any light on the subject. Henry Phillips asserts that Franklin was probably "one of the prime movers in the matter."[2] The Journals of the Continental Congress show that on June 23, 1775, he was

[1] Letter of Franklin to Galloway, London, March 9, 1769. Clements Library.

[2] Henry Phillips, Jr., *Historical Sketches of the Paper Currency of the American Colonies*, Second Series, p. 25.

appointed on a committee "to get proper plates engraved, to provide paper, and to agree with printers to print the above bills." [1] Again on November 13, 1775, he was appointed, together with the other members of the Pennsylvania delegation, to call on the signers of the bills to get them to make more haste in signing. The Committee of Inspection of Philadelphia informed Congress that sundry persons of that city refused to take the continental paper money and that of Pennsylvania. Congress referred this matter to a committee of seven of which Franklin was a member, November 23, 1775.[2] The public and secret journals of the Continental Congress make no further references to Franklin's connection with paper money. Breck states that the devices and maxims on the notes were said to have been the joint composition of Franklin and Charles Thomson who had the assistance of other members who knew Latin.[3]

In a letter to Samuel Cooper, Passy, April 22, 1779, Franklin refers to his objections to the method employed by the Continental Congress for issuing bills of credit: "I took all the Pains I could in Congress to prevent Depreciation, by proposing first, that the Bills should bear Interest; this was rejected, and they were struck as you see them. Secondly, after the first Emission, I proposed that we should stop, strike no more, but borrow on Interest those we had issued. This was not then approved of, and more Bills were issued. When, from the too great Quantity, they

[1] *Journals of the Continental Congress* (Ed. by W. C. Ford), II, 106.
[2] Ibid., III, 367, 368.
[3] Samuel Breck, *Historical Sketch of Continental Paper Money*, p. 14.

began to depreciate, we agreed to borrow on Interest; and I propos'd, that, in order to fix the Value of the Principal, the Interest should be promised in hard Dollars. This was objected to as impracticable; but I still continue of Opinion, that, by sending out Cargoes to purchase it, we might have brought in Money sufficient for that purpose, as we brought in powder, &c.&c. . . ." [1]

Franklin deplored the depreciation of the continental bills of credit, but consoled himself with the belief that the depreciation of this currency acted as a "tax." In a letter to Thomas Ruston, October 9, 1780, he wrote: "But this Depreciation, tho' in some Circumstances inconvenient, has had the general good and great Effect of operating as a Tax, and perhaps the most equal of all Taxes, since it depreciated in the Hands of the Holders of Money, and thereby tax'd them in proportion to the Sums they held and the time they held it, which generally is in proportion to Men's Wealth. Thus, after having done its Business, the Paper is reduc'd to the sixtieth Part of its original Value." [2]

The statement that the depreciation of the continental bills of credit acted as a just and equal "tax" and that it "taxed" persons in proportion to their wealth and the length of time they held this currency may be seriously questioned. As a matter of fact, those to whom payments of money were due, at dates after issues of the rapidly depreciating continental

[1] Franklin (Smyth), VII, 293. See also Franklin's letter to Josiah Quincy, Passy, September 11, 1783. Ibid., IX, 93-94.
[2] Ibid., VIII, 151-152.

currency, sustained exceptionally heavy losses by its depreciation. Poor persons whose financial condition compelled them to accept this currency in order to meet their monetary needs were also heavy losers. In 1790 Alexander Hamilton estimated that $78,000,000 of the older continental issues were still outstanding. These issues, under the Funding Act of August 4, 1790, were redeemable at 100 to 1 in subscription for government stock but only $6,000,000 were subscribed. Thus about $72,000,000 of this currency were never redeemed.[1] Some of the bills included in this amount were probably held either by those who were ignorant of the government's offer to redeem them or by those who hoped that the government would eventually redeem this currency on better terms. Some of the bills included in this amount were also probably lost or destroyed.

The writer suggests that Franklin did considerable to acquaint France with the subject of American paper money in the period before the French Revolution while he was United States' minister in France. He undoubtedly discussed this subject with many of the Physiocrats with whom he was long associated; and also with members of the Masonic *Loge des neuf Soeurs*[2] who later became deputies of the French National Assembly which in November, 1789, voted to issue *assignats*. Memoranda among his papers indicate that he discussed American currency and paper

[1] D. R. Dewey, *The Financial History of the United States*, p. 41.

[2] For Franklin's activities in this lodge see an article by D. J. Hill, "A Missing Chapter of Franco-American History" in the *American Historical Review*, July, 1916; also Louis Amiable, *Une Loge Maçonnique d'avant 1789*.

money, and also the financial problems of France during his residence there.[1] He was a friend of Count Mirabeau who proposed that the *assignats* should be issued on the nationalized lands of the Church.[2] From 1768-1785 he was also a close friend of the Physiocrat, Du Pont de Nemours, who chiefly drew up the reports of the Committee on Finance of the French National Assembly (1789-1790).[3] Franklin's paper, *Of the Paper Money of the United States,*[4] was written during his residence in France, and contains an excellent brief account of American currency during the period of the American Revolution. It undoubtedly gave many Frenchmen information on the subject. That he discussed American finance with the Physiocrat, Abbé Morellet, is shown by his letter to Thomas Ruston, Passy, October 9, 1780, in which he wrote, "I received and read with Pleasure your Thoughts on American Finance, and your Scheme of a Bank. I communicated them to Abbé Morellet, who is a good Judge of the Subject, and he has translated them into French. He thinks them

[1] See *Calendar Franklin Papers,* III, 516, 547; IV, 390.

[2] Mirabeau, although well aware of the evils of paper money, thought that its emission would be a better financial expedient than continual loans, and also that by its issue an independent class of small landowners, who would support the cause of the Revolution, would be created. H. Morse Stephens and Heinrich von Sybel in their histories of the French Revolution both state that Mirabeau was influenced to favor the issue of *assignats* by Clavière, a Genevese exile, whom he met at Paris in 1786. Clavière was acquainted with the finances of the United States. See Thomas Jefferson's letter to Samuel Osgood, Paris, January 5, 1787. *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson,* Monticello Edition, VI, 39-40. He was a member of *La Société Gallo-Americaine,* founded in January 1787, to promote friendly relations between France and the United States. He was also co-author with Brissot de Warville of *De La France et des Etats-Unis* (Publié à Londres en 1787).

[3] Du Pont de Nemours at first opposed the issue of *assignats.*

[4] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 231-236.

generally very just, and very clearly expresst." [1]

His interest in the financial affairs of France is also shown by his letter to Richard Price, Passy, February 1, 1785, in which he writes, "I send you herewith a new work of Mr. Necker's on the Finances of France.[2] You will find some good things in it, particularly his chapter on War. I imagine Abbé Morellet may have sent a copy to Lord Lansdowne. If not, please to communicate it. I think I sent you formerly his Conte rendu.[3] This work makes more talk here than that, tho' that made abundance." [4]

Three letters of Franklin, written after his return to America from France (1785) and addressed to his French friends, make reference to paper money. Two of these letters were written to Le Veillard; one to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld. The former was one of the Physiocrats and a neighbor of Franklin at Passy. Both were members with Franklin of the *Loge des neuf Soeurs* at Paris and both became deputies of the French National Assembly which voted to issue *assignats*.

Franklin's letter to Le Veillard, Philadelphia, April 15, 1787, attempts to remove certain misconceptions the latter had relative to American paper money.

[1] Ibid., VIII, 151.

[2] Jacques Necker's *De l'Administration des Finances de la France* (Paris 1784, 3 Vols.).

[3] Necker's famous *Compte rendu* (Paris, 1781) by which the nation was informed how the public money was being spent. Necker's act of publishing this financial report was interpreted by the nation as implying that the government conceded it the right to know and to advise about national finances. This was generally regarded as a step towards constitutional government.

[4] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 286-287.

Franklin wrote to him as follows: "What you mention of our paper money, if you mean that of this State, Pennsylvania, is not well understood. It was made before my arrival, and not being a legal tender can do no injustice to anybody, nor does anyone here complain of it, though many are justly averse to an increase of the quantity at this time, there being a great deal of real money in the country, and one bank in good credit." [1]

Franklin again wrote to Le Veillard, February 17, 1788, and made the following statement in regard to paper money: "Where there is a free government, and the people make their own laws by their representatives, I see no injustice in their obliging one another to take their own paper money. It is no more so than compelling a man by law to take his own note. But it is unjust to pay strangers with such money against their will. The making of paper money with such a sanction is however a folly, since, although you may by law oblige a citizen to take it for his goods, you cannot fix his prices; and his liberty of rating them as he pleases, which is the same thing as setting what value he pleases on your money, defeats your sanction." [2]

In this letter to Le Veillard Franklin expressed his concern for the solution of the problems of the French government: "I have been concerned," he wrote, "to

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 561. The bank Franklin referred to was the Bank of North America. In his will he bequeathed twelve shares of stock in this bank to his daughter, Sarah, and her husband, Richard Bache. Ibid., X, 496.

[2] Ibid., IX, 638.

hear of the troubles in the internal government of the country I love; and hope some good may come out of them; and that they may end without mischief."

In a letter to the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Philadelphia, April 15, 1787, Franklin made this statement relative to the party strifes in the United States over the question of paper money: "Paper money in moderate quantities has been found beneficial; when more than the occasions of commerce require, it depreciated and was mischievous; and the populace are apt to demand more than is necessary. In this State we have some, and it is useful, and I do not hear any clamour for more." [1]

These letters were written during the period when the questions of taxation and the bankruptcy of the government were the greatest public problems in France. The Assembly of Notables was convened by the king in 1787 to provide ways and means to place the country on a sound financial basis, but it failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was called. Two years later (May 5, 1789) the States General met at Versailles to solve the same problem. The deputies did not know when they first met that they were to give France a constitution.[2] The purpose for which they were called and the question on which they were chiefly prepared to act was the relief of the bankrupt government.

[1] Ibid., IX, 564.

[2] It was not until June 20, 1789, that the third estate took the famous "Oath of the Tennis Court" declaring that it would not dissolve until it had given France a constitution.

Many Frenchmen were greatly interested in the American governmental and financial experiments in the period that intervened between the American and the French Revolutions. They regarded the new republic of the West as a veritable Utopia whose example they felt sure France might profitably follow. During the greater part of this period (1776-1785) the most influential American in France was our diplomatic representative, Benjamin Franklin, who was there regarded as one of the sagest of philosophers. He expressed the belief that the depreciation of the continental bills of credit acted as a gradual "tax" on holders and that it "taxed" them in proportion to their wealth. This view of the effect of their depreciation may have been accepted by numerous Frenchmen with whom he discussed American and French problems of government finance. Perhaps it would not be a misstatement to affirm that the acceptance of his views on the utility of paper money was one factor which determined some of the deputies of the National Assembly to favor the issue of fiat money as a financial expedient at the beginning of the French Revolution.[1] At any rate when that body authorized the first issue of *assignats* (April 1790) it provided that they should be based on productive real estate and that the notes should bear three per cent interest. It is interesting to observe that Frank-

[1] The French at this time of course had not forgotten John Law's disastrous experiments with paper money (1716-1720). French government officials and merchants as well as French travelers and soldiers who returned to France from the United States were also familiar with American paper money.

lin had favored the features of this method for the issue of paper money in America.[1]

As a member of the United States' Federal Constitutional Convention (1787) Franklin voted with the other delegates from Pennsylvania to strike out of the first draft of what eventually became Section 8 of Article I of the federal constitution the words, "and emit bills," which, if retained, would have given the federal government the express power to emit bills of credit.[2] He also voted with the Pennsylvania delegation for the adoption of the first paragraph of Section 10 of Article 1 which denied to the states the right to emit bills of credit.[3]

SUMMARY

Franklin's first ideas about paper money were derived from Massachusetts' experience with this currency and probably also from pamphlets dealing with the subject which appeared in that colony during his youth. Certain Mercantilist notions about the nature of money and its superiority over other forms of wealth may be observed in his earlier writings on paper money. He also employed the Mercantilist argument of unfavorable balance of trade to explain the shortage of metallic currency in the American

[1] He advocated basing issues of paper money on the basis of land security in *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* in 1728 and in *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money* (1767). After the first issue of bills of credit by the second Continental Congress he urged that subsequent emissions of this currency should bear interest payable in hard money.

[2] *Records of the Federal Convention* (edited by Max Farrand), II, 310.

[3] Ibid., II, 436.

colonies. He made novel and original use of early monetary theories in these writings and showed unusual keenness in observing and marshalling facts for his arguments in support of paper currency.

Franklin's views on paper money varied with the course of political events and were modified by the changes of colonial opinion on the subject. In *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* (1728) he favored basing issues on land mortgaged to the colonial government of Pennsylvania, and maintained that overissues of such bills were not only impossible but also that overissues would not result in their depreciation. In *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money* (1767) he held that bills of credit should be legal tender; that they should be funded on sufficient taxes for discharging them or on land security, and that they should not bear interest. By 1771 he saw that overissues would cause a depreciation in the value of such currency. After the first issue of bills of credit by the second Continental Congress (1775) he urged that the government should borrow at interest, payable in hard money, the bills it had issued and that no more should be authorized. When Congress did not follow his advice and made overissues which resulted in their rapid depreciation he consoled himself with the thought that the depreciation of the bills acted as a "tax" on holders and that it generally "taxed" them in proportion to their wealth and length of time they held the notes. In 1788 he stated that it was not unjust to compel citizens to take notes which were legal

tender when they had a representative government; but that it was unjust to pay strangers in such money against their will. He pointed out, however, that since persons could rate their goods as they pleased in terms of any currency that it was a folly to issue legal-tender notes.

Franklin was a provincial agent representing six American colonies within the period from 1757 until 1775, and the expressions of his views on paper money were calculated to coincide with those of the American colonists. During this period he was a special pleader for what the colonists believed would promote their economic interests. When the American Revolution began and when he was a member of the second Continental Congress, however, he freely expressed his own views. In that body, as has been shown, he favored a restriction of the amount of bills of credit and advocated that they should bear interest payable in hard money. After 1775 one may find in his private letters the expression of his unbiased views on paper money: he held that this currency was beneficial when issued in limited amounts; and that it should be based on good security; that the notes should bear interest, and that it was a folly to make them legal tender.

He exerted considerable influence in the paper money controversies in Pennsylvania. His *Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency,* was one factor that moulded public opinion of the colony which was reflected in the Assembly's decision to continue to emit this currency.

This essay, as has been shown, also appeared in the press of the neighboring colony of Maryland where it undoubtedly exerted some influence upon public opinion.[1] As a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly he was a leader of the paper money party, and as its Speaker he was largely responsible for the passage of the act of May 30, 1764, for the emission of 55,000 pounds of bills of credit. While he was colonial agent in Great Britain he tried in vain to secure a modification or the repeal of the Currency Act of 1764. His efforts along this line, however, acquainted many people of that country with the nature of American paper money and convinced them of its practical utility to the colonists. David Hume, Abbé Morellet and Adam Smith, three writers in the field of economics in the eighteenth century, obtained information on the subject either from him personally or from his writings.

His arguments in support of American paper money and our Continental notes seem to have created a disposition in the minds of a few men who later became deputies of the first National Assembly of the French Revolution, as well as in the minds of a number of other influential Frenchmen, to favor the issue of *assignats*.

[1] Franklin's *Pennsylvania Gazette* and his unsuccessful monthly journal, *The General Magazine, and Historical Chronicle, for all the British Plantations in America* (January-June 1741), although they did not contain any articles on paper money by Franklin, did, however, give considerable attention to bills and acts of the colonial assemblies for the emission of paper money, and also to the attitude of the British government on this question.

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Chapter II

VALUE AND INTEREST [1]

In his paper, *Value, Price and Profit,* which was communicated to the General Council of International Workingmen's Association, held at London in September, 1865, Karl Marx cited an example from Franklin's *Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* as illustrative of his own theory of value, and stated that Franklin was "one of the first" to "hit upon the true nature of value." [2] Again in a footnote [3] of his *Capital* (1867) Marx wrote: "The celebrated Franklin, one of the first economists after William Petty, who saw through the nature of value, says: 'Trade in general being nothing else but the exchange of labour for labour, the value of all things is . . . most justly measured by labour' (The works of B. Franklin, &c., edited by Sparks, Boston, 1836, Vol. II, p. 267) Franklin is unconscious that by estimating the value of everything in labour, he makes abstraction from any difference in the sorts of labour exchanged, and thus reduces them all to equal human labour. But although ignorant of this, yet he says it. He speaks first of 'the one labour,' then of 'the other labour'

[1] In this chapter no mention is made of the change in Franklin's views on value when he came under the influence of the Physiocrats. For his later views on this subject see the chapter on the physiocrats.

[2] Karl Marx, *Value, Price and Profit,* p. 58. Marx wrongly gives the date of Franklin's paper as 1721. It first appeared in the *Maryland Gazette,* December 17, 1728, and in pamphlet form at Philadelphia in 1729.

[3] Karl Marx, *Capital.* Vol. I, note, p. 59.

and finally of 'labour,' without further qualification, as the substance of the value of everything."

These statements of Marx have led some to regard Franklin as one of the originators of the socialistic theory of value, a distinction to which he is not entitled; for his theory of value as he expounded it in 1728, was unquestionably taken from Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662), a fact which Dr. Wetzel was first to point out by comparing passages of this work with Franklin's *Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* (1728). For the sake of completeness the passages from the writings of the two men are given below:

Sir William Petty

A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions, 1662.

"If a man can bring to *London* an ounce of Silver out of the Earth in *Peru,* in the same time that he can produce a Bushel of Corn, then one is the natural price of the other; now if by reason of new and more easie Mines a man can get two ounces of Silver as easily as formerly he did one, then Corn will

Benjamin Franklin

A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency, 1728.

"By Labour may the Value of Silver be measured as well as other Things. As, Suppose one Man employed to raise Corn, while another is digging and refining Silver; at the Year's End, or at any other Period of Time, the compleat Produce of Corn, and that of Silver, are the natural Price of each other; and if one be twenty Bushels, and the other twenty Ounces, then an ounce of that Silver is worth the Labour of raising a bushel of that Corn.

be as cheap at ten shillings the Bushel, as it was before at five shillings, *caeteris paribus.*" [1]

Now if by the Discovery of some nearer, more easy or plentiful Mines, a man may get Forty Ounces of Silver as easily as formerly he did Twenty, and the same Labour is still required to raise Twenty Bushels of Corn, then Two Ounces of Silver will be worth no more than the same Labour of raising one Bushel of Corn, and that Bushel of Corn will be as cheap at two Ounces, as it was before at one, *caeteris paribus.*" [2]

The Austrian economist, Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk, in his work *Capital and Interest* (1890) describes "Turgot as the first who tried to give a scientific explanation of Natural Interest on capital." [3] Five years later (1895) Wetzel wrote that Franklin stated this theory of interest almost fifty years before Turgot wrote his *Reflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses;* [4] but he failed to discover that Franklin's statement of this theory was taken nearly verbatim from Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions.* For proof that Franklin obtained his statement of the theory of Natural In-

[1] Quoted from Sir William Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions,* p. 31.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), II, 144.

[3] Böhm-Bawerk in his *Capital and Interest* (London, 1890), pp. 63-5, summarizes Turgot's so-called fructification theory of interest from paragraphs of the latter's *Reflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses* which was written in 1766.

[4] W. A. Wetzel, *Benjamin Franklin as an Economist,* pp. 21-22.

terest from Petty one has only to compare the following passages from their respective writings:

Sir William Petty

A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions (Third Edition, London, 1685), p. 28.

"Now the questions arising hence are; what are the natural Standards of Usury and Exchange? As for Usury, the least that can be, is the Rent of so much Land as the money lent will buy, where the security is undoubted; but where the Security is casual, then a kind of ensurance must be enterwoven with the simple natural Interest, which may advance the Usury very conscionably unto any height below the Principal it self."

Benjamin Franklin

A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency (1728). Franklin (Smyth), II, 150-151.

"If we enquire, *How much per cent Interest ought to be required upon the Loan of these Bills*, we must consider what is the Natural Standard of Usury: And this appears to be, where the Security is undoubted, at least the Rent of so much Land as the Money lent will buy: For it cannot be expected, that any Man will lend his Money for less than it would fetch him in as Rent if he laid it out in Land, which is the most secure Property in the World. But if the Security is casual, then a kind of ensurance must be enterwoven with the simple natural Interest, which may advance the Usury very conscionably to any height below the Principal itself." [1]

[1] When inclined to blame Franklin for plagiarism from Petty one should recall that the attitude towards plagiarism in the eighteenth century was quite different than it is at present. Writers then—many of the English dramatists and Voltaire for example—appropriated whole passages from the works of other writers without acknowledgment. Plagiarism from foreign authors was then an especially common practice.

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Chapter III

POPULATION

In the first paragraph of his essay, *Observations concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.* (1751), Franklin makes the following statement: "Tables of the Proportion of Marriages to Births, of Deaths to Births, of Marriages to the Numbers of Inhabitants, &c., form'd on Observations made upon the Bills of Mortality, Christnings, &c., of populous Cities, will not suit Countries; nor will Tables form'd on Observations made on full-settled old Countries, as *Europe*, suit new Countries, as *America*."

From this passage it appears that Franklin was familiar with tables dealing with the vital statistics of populous European cities.

Four English writers, Edmund Halley, Sir William Petty, John Graunt and Dr. Thomas Short had written observations on bills of mortality of populous European cities prior to 1751. We definitely know that Franklin had read Petty's *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* before 1728, and it is possible that he had also seen some of his numerous Essays in Political Arithmetick which contain observations on the vital statistics of nearly all of the large cities of Europe. There is very good reason to believe that he was

familiar with Edmund Halley's *An Estimate of the Degrees of the Mortality of Mankind, drawn from curious Tables of the Births and Funerals of the City of Breslaw; with an Attempt to ascertain the Price of Annuities upon Lives* which appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society at London (Vols. 17-18, 1692-1694). The most probable source of his information on the vital statistics of European cities, however, was Dr. Thomas Short's *New Observations, Natural, Moral, Civil, Political, and Medical, on City, Town and Country Bills of Mortality* (1750), which contains remarks on the treatises of John Graunt and Sir William Petty.[1]

In *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* and in his essay, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered with Regard to her Colonies and the Acquisition of Canada and Guadaloupe* (1760), Franklin observed that the employments of the people of a country would be determined by the density of its population. In the latter essay he wrote: "It is a striking observation of a very *able pen*,[2] that the natural livelyhood of the thin inhabitants of a forest country is hunting; that of a greater number, pasturage; that of a middling population, agriculture;

[1] The Library Company of Philadelphia had the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society in 1751 and probably also Short's treatise. Franklin and Hall printed the latter's *Medicina Britannica* in 1751. That Franklin was familiar with Halley's "Breslau Table of Mortality" is shown by an undated memorandum, *Dr. Halley's Life insurance observations*, among his papers. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, IV, 374.

[2] Franklin refers to paragraph 5 of his own *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* which appeared anonymously as an appendage to William Clarke's *Observations on the Late and Present Conduct of the French*, which was published at Boston and at London in 1755.

and that of the greatest, manufactures; which last must subsist the bulk of the people in a full country or they must be subsisted by charity, or perish."[1] This generalization is one of the central ideas in Franklin's theory of population. Its validity seemed to him to be clearly proved by facts; for in the sparsely settled American colonies the great portion of the population gained a livelihood from the extractive industries.

Franklin's purpose in writing *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* was to show that the American colonists would be employed in the extractive industries, particularly in agriculture, for ages. He wished to point out that British legislation placing restraints on colonial manufacture was therefore a folly. The great increase of American population (doubling,[2] as he claimed, every twenty or twenty-five years by natural propagation) would create a rapidly growing market for English manufactured goods.

His pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered with Regard to her Colonies and the Acquisitions of Canada and Guadaloupe* appeared in London in 1760. His primary object in publishing this pamphlet, to which his *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* was appended, was to influence public opinion and the Newcastle-Pitt Ministry to

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 49.

[2] The doubling of population within certain periods of time was a matter which Sir William Petty considered in his Essays in Political Arithmetick. See for example *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty* (Edited by Charles Henry Hull, Cambridge, 1899), II, 459, 463.

favor the retention of Canada instead of the small sugar-producing island of Guadeloupe in the West Indies when a treaty of peace was concluded with France at the close of the Seven Years' War.[1] He believed that the great accession to British territory by the acquisition of Canada would promote the American extractive industries. If these industries were to grow and American population was to increase, was not room for expansion absolutely necessary? So long as the colonists remained employed in the extractive industries had England any occasion to fear that they would attempt to compete with her in manufacturing? If the colonies increased in population as the facility and means of gaining a livelihood increased, would they not consume more British manufactured goods? Would they not also produce more raw materials for British manufacture as well as other products which England needed and did not produce at home?

The essay *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* contains nearly all of Franklin's thoughts on the subject of population. He stated in it that the increase of population was proportionate to the number of marriages, and that marriages were more numerous and occurred earlier in life when economic conditions were such that it was easy for people to earn a living. He pointed out that in cities where the means of gaining livelihoods were all taken up that people either postponed marriage until late in life or

[1] By the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1763) Great Britain retained Canada and returned Guadeloupe to France.

remained single. For these reasons the mortality rates of cities were higher than their birth rates.

He observed that in countries where land was completely occupied and intensively cultivated that there was a great number of landless wage-earners who were compelled to work for land owners. The cause of low wages in such countries was the great number of laborers. Low wages deterred many from marriage. The rural population of fully settled countries increased only when there was an influx of people from the country to the cities.

He stated that owing to the abundance of cheap land in America, it was comparatively easy to support a family. Hence a relatively larger number of people in America married than in Europe and also at earlier ages. He calculated that the number of marriages and births in America would be double that of Europe; that there would be two marriages per annum among a hundred Americans and eight children on the average in an American family. If half the number of children, who were born, grew up and married at the age of twenty, the population of America would double every twenty or twenty-five years.

He contended that it would be ages before the vast territory of North America was fully settled, and until that time arrived wages would never be cheap there. He noticed that American laborers did not continue to work long for others but obtained farms of their own. The abundance and cheapness of lands therefore kept their rates of wages at a high level even

in spite of the immigration of laborers from Europe.

Franklin recognized that the following things discouraged marriage and would consequently diminish the native population of a nation:

"1. *The being conquered;* for the Conquerors will engross as many Offices, and exact as much Tribute or Profit on the labour of the conquered, as will maintain them in their new Establishment, and this diminishing the Subsistence of the Natives, discourages their Marriages, and so gradually diminishes them, while the foreigners increase. 2. *Loss of Territory.* Thus, the *Britons* being driven into *Wales,* and crowded together in a barren Country insufficient to support such great Numbers, diminished 'till the People bore a Proportion to the Produce, while the *Saxons* increas'd on their abandoned lands; till the Island became full of *English.* And, were the *English* now driven into *Wales* by some foreign Nation, there would in a few years, be no more Englishmen in *Britain,* than there are now people in *Wales.* 3. *Loss of Trade.* Manufactures exported, draw Subsistence from Foreign Countries for Numbers; who are thereby enabled to marry and raise Families. If the Nation be deprived of any Branch of Trade, and no new Employment is found for the People occupy'd in that Branch, it will also be soon deprived of so many People. 4. *Loss of Food.* Suppose a Nation has a Fishery, which not only employs great Numbers, but makes the Food and Subsistence of the People cheaper. If another Nation becomes Master of the Seas, and prevents the Fishery, the People will

diminish in Proportion as the loss of Employ and Dearness of Provision, makes it more difficult to subsist a Family. 5. *Bad Government and insecure Property.* People not only leave such a Country, and settling Abroad incorporate with other Nations, lose their native Language, and become Foreigners, but, the Industry of those that remain being discourag'd, the Quantity of Subsistence in the Country is lessen'd, and the Support of a Family becomes more difficult. So heavy Taxes tend to diminish a People. 6. *The Introduction of Slaves.* The Negroes brought into the *English* Sugar *Islands* have greatly diminish'd the Whites there; the Poor are by this Means deprived of Employment, while a few Families acquire vast Estates; which they spend on Foreign Luxuries, and educating their Children in the habit of those Luxuries; the same Income is needed for the Support of one that might have maintain'd 100. The Whites who have Slaves, not labouring, are enfeebled, and therefore not so generally prolific; the Slaves being work'd too hard, and ill fed, their Constitutions are broken, and the Deaths among them are more than the Births; so that a continual Supply is needed from *Africa.* The Northern Colonies, having few Slaves, increase in Whites. Slaves also pejorate [1] the Families that use them; the white Children become proud, disgusted with Labour, and being educated in Idleness, are rendered unfit to get a Living by Industry." [2]

Franklin also believed that the purchase and con-

[1] "Pejorate," an obsolete word meaning to enfeeble or to weaken.
[2] Franklin (Smyth), III, 67-68.

sumption of foreign luxuries and "needless" manufactures would diminish the population of a country because the money thus expended might have been used to procure subsistence. The immigration of foreigners into a fully settled country would also lessen the native population of a country if they were less frugal and industrious than the natives of the country by depriving the latter of means of subsistence.

Most of Franklin's ideas on the ways and means by which the population of a country might be increased are expressed in the following paragraphs:

"Hence the Prince that acquires new Territory, if he finds it vacant, or removes the Natives to give his own People room; the Legislator that makes effectual Laws for promoting of Trade, increasing Employment, improving Land by more or better Tillage, providing more Food by Fisheries; securing Property, &c. and the Man that invents new Trades, Arts, or Manufactures, or new Improvements in Husbandry, may be properly called *Fathers* of their Nation, as they are the Cause of the Generation of Multitudes, by the Encouragement they afford to Marriage.

"As to Privileges granted to the married, (such as the *Jus trium Liberorum* [1] among the *Romans,*) they may hasten the filling of a Country that has been thinned by War or Pestilence, or that has otherwise

[1] By either the *lex Julia* or the *lex Papia Poppæa* (18 B.C.) of the reign of Augustus, the mother of three children was allowed to wear the *stola* as a mark of special distinction. She was also given civil rights and relieved of the last disabilities of wardship. See G. Ferrero, *The Greatness and Decline of Rome,* V, 62 and notes (New York, 1909).

vacant Territory; but cannot Increase a People beyond the Means Provided for their Subsistence.

"Foreign Luxuries, and needless Manufactures, imported and used in a Nation, do, by the same Reasoning, increase the People of the Nation that furnishes them, and diminish the People of the Nation that uses them. Laws, therefore, that prevent such Importations, and on the contrary promote the Exportation of Manufactures to be consumed in Foreign Countries, may be called (with Respect to the People that make them) *generative Laws,* as, by increasing Subsistence they encourage Marriage. Such Laws likewise strengthen a Country, doubly, by increasing its own People and diminishing its Neighbors. . . .

"Home Luxury in the Great increases the Nation's Manufactures employ'd by it, who are many, and only tends to diminish the Families that indulge in it, who are few. The greater the common fashionable Expence of any Rank of People, the more cautious they are of Marriage. Therefore Luxury should never be suffer'd to become common.

"The great Increase of Offspring in particular Families is not always owing to greater Fecundity of Nature, but sometimes to Examples of Industry in the Heads, and industrious Education; by which the Children are enabled to provide better for themselves, and their marrying early is encouraged from the Prospect of good Subsistence.

"If there be a Sect, therefore, in our Nation, that regard Frugality and Industry as religious Duties, and educate their Children therein, more than others com-

monly do; such Sect must consequently increase more by natural Generation, than any other sect in *Britain*." [1]

He also noticed that the immigration of foreigners into a country would increase its population provided they were more industrious and frugal than the native population.[2]

The central ideas of Franklin's theory of population were that there was a constant tendency or a native capacity in all species to increase beyond the food supply available for their subsistence, and that the lack of a food supply would act as an ultimate check on this natural fecundity of species. He noticed four distinct sets of immediate causes or checks which would tend to diminish the population of a nation: (1) those which reduced food supply or means of subsistence; (2) war and pestilence; (3) the physical enfeeblement and consequent impairment of the *vis generandi* of those who owned slaves; (4) subjective conditions which caused postponement of marriage—love of luxury, lack of "industrious education," of frugal and industrious habits, and of ideals placing a high valuation on the acquirement of these habits.

His calculation that population in America would double by natural propagation every twenty-five years was approximately correct up to 1860, and his statement that cheap and plentiful lands would not only tend to maintain American wages at a comparatively

[1] Franklin (Smyth), III, 68-70.
[2] Ibid., III, 70-71, par. 21.

high level but would also be the principal cause of the rapid increase of our population, was also true for over a century.

He advocated early marriages for the promotion of economic prosperity, for the foundation of human happiness and for the building of character;[1] also for the lessening of sexual vice. He collected vital statistics for his own information and for his friend, Dr. Richard Price, the English political economist.[2] The high mortality rates in English factory centres convinced him that the factory system of manufacture was a positive social evil which might be remedied by carrying on manufacture in the home.[3] He was opposed to legislation placing restraints on emigration and held that it was a violation of natural law and a crime against humanity to keep people within the political boundaries of a country which possessed means insufficient for their subsistence.

Franklin was one of the earliest writers to treat the problem of population in a scientific spirit. He anticipated Malthus by nearly half a century in stating the principle that there was a constant tendency for species to outrun food supply and to be held in check by the means available for subsistence.[4] Al-

[1] See his letter to John Alleyne, August 9, 1768. Franklin (Smyth), V, 156-159. This letter was printed in the *Annual Register* (1793), Vol. 35, pp. 371-372.

[2] See Franklin (Smyth), VI, 31, 138-140; *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 168; II, 312; IV, 395.

[3] See his letter to Dr. Thomas Percival of Manchester, England, September 25, 1773. Franklin (Smyth), VI, 139.

[4] Franklin stated this principle in his *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* (1751) and Malthus in the first edition of his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

though Malthus did not derive this principle from Franklin he recognized that the latter had long preceded him in observing it; for in the sixth edition of his famous *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1826) he cites the following passage of Franklin's essay, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind:*

"It is observed by Dr. Franklin, that there is no bound to the prolific nature of plants or animals, but what is made by their crowding and interfering with each other's means of subsistence. Were the face of the earth, he says, vacant of plants, it might be gradually sowed and overspread with one kind only, as for instance with fennel: and were it empty of other inhabitants it might in a few ages be replenished from one nation only, as for instance with Englishmen." [1]

Malthus apparently had not read Franklin's writings on population when he wrote his first *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798). In the preface to this Essay he mentions the names of other writers who preceded him in treating the subject of population but makes no reference to Franklin. He read the latter's writings, however, before he wrote his second *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1803), because in its preface he mentions Franklin as one of the more recent English writers who had noticed that poverty and misery arose from too rapid increase of population. In the second edition of his Essay Malthus added "moral restraint" to his list of checks to

[1] T. R. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, p. 2.

the increase of population. He defined "moral restraint" as "restraint from marriage from prudential motives with a conduct strictly moral during the period of this restraint."

In Franklin's *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind,* which Malthus read before he wrote his second Essay on population, the effect of moral restraint as a check to the increase of population is clearly stated in these words: "The greater the common fashionable expense of any rank of people, the more cautious they are of marriage." This statement in Franklin's essay may have influenced Malthus to consider the significance of moral restraint as a check to the increase of population. At any rate Franklin anticipated him in observing its importance. Franklin frequently asserted that the population of America would double by natural increase every twenty-five years.[1] Malthus also stated "that population, when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years. . . ." He relied on the authority of Franklin when he wrote, "The great extent of territory required for the support of the hunter has been repeatedly stated and acknowledged."[2] Malthus' familiarity with Franklin's *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* is again shown in the following passage of his *Essay on the Principle of Population:* "Africa has been at all times the principal mart

[1] See for instance his examination in the House of Commons relative to the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 419.

[2] T. R. Malthus, op. cit., p. 20, footnote 3. Malthus refers to *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.,* printed in Franklin's *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces.* (London, 1779), p. 2.

of slaves. The drains of its population in this way have been great and constant, particularly since their introduction into the European colonies; but perhaps, as Dr. Franklin observes, it would be difficult to find the gap that has been made by a hundred years' exportation of negroes which has blackened half America." [1]

The essay, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind,* was Franklin's most original and probably his most important contribution to economic literature. Adam Smith had two copies of it in his library and seems to have derived ideas from it which he incorporated into *The Wealth of Nations.* It was read by many political economists who were contemporaries of Franklin—by David Hume, Lord Kames, Richard Price, Turgot and a number of the French *économistes.* This paper was not only read by political economists but also by the public in America and in England during Franklin's lifetime. It was first printed at Boston in 1755 as an appendage to a political tract, *Observations on the Late and Present Conduct of the French,* which was written by William Clarke. Its next appearance in print was in Franklin's pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered,* which was published at London in 1760. In the same year extracts from it appeared in the *London Chronicle* (May 17-20, 1760). It was again printed in Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* (London, 1769) and translated into

[1] T. R. Malthus, op. cit., p. 82. Malthus refers to *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.,* in Franklin's *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces* (London, 1779), p. 9.

French, was published at Paris in 1769 together with a French translation of John Dickinson's "Farmers Letters."[1] Malthus read this essay in Franklin's *Political, Miscellaneous, and Philosophical Pieces,* which was published at London in 1779. It was included, together with a number of Franklin's other economic writings, in Lord Overstone's *Select Collection of Scarce and Valuable Economical Tracts* (1857), edited by J. R. McCulloch.

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[1] *Lettres d'un Fermier de Pensylvanie, aux Habitans de l'Amérique Septentrionale. Traduites de l'Anglois, Par Barbeu Dubourg.* Amsterdam [Paris], 1769. See pp. 239-252 of this work for the French translation of Franklin's essay.

Chapter IV

SLAVERY

DURING his lifetime Franklin was associated with the most prominent exponents of the abolition of negro slavery in America and Great Britain. His views on slavery are to be found in correspondence with such famous early American opponents of slavery as Anthony Benezet and Dr. Benjamin Rush; with Granville Sharp, the English abolitionist who successfully championed the cause of the negro, Sommersett, before the Court of the King's Bench in 1772, and with many other abolitionists on both sides of the Atlantic who exercised an important influence in the abolitionist movement. He not only condemned the institution of slavery in his private correspondence but also in the public press of England and America as well as in his more formal writings. His *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries,* &c. (1751), in which he attacked slavery from an economic standpoint, was published at Boston in 1755 and in England in 1760 and 1769. This essay, widely read in Franklin's day, and at later times, contained sound and effective arguments against slavery.

In January, 1760, "Dr. Bray's Associates" of London, trustees of the funds left by Dr. Bray on his

death in 1730 for the education and conversion of the negroes in North America, elected Franklin to their society [1] in which he continued to be a corresponding member until he died in 1790. During the last three years of his life (1787-1790) he was President of "The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery," the first abolition society in America.[2] In this capacity, when he was internationally famous for a great variety of achievements, he wrote *An Address to the Public* (1789) and *Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks* to influence public opinion in behalf of the negro.

The Quakers with whom Franklin was chiefly associated in the abolitionist movement in England and America were the first religious sectarians to condemn slavery. They were the first of all religious organizations in a body to free their slaves and to discredit the institution of slavery. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, while visiting the West Indies in 1671 advised against the practice. Protests against the importation of slaves and against slavery were made by various Quaker religious meetings from 1689 until 1755, when the yearly meeting adopted a ruling that all who should thereafter import slaves would be denied religious communion in the Society. The yearly meeting of 1758 urged Friends to free their

[1] Letter from John Waring, London, January 4, 1760. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 21.

[2] This Society began its existence April 14, 1775, as "The Society for the Relief of Free Negroes, unlawfully held in Bondage." It was reorganized in 1784, and a new name and constitution was adopted in 1787. The State Legislature of Pennsylvania granted the society a charter of incorporation in 1789. See E. R. Turner, The First Abolition Society in the United States, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1912), XXXVI, 94.

slaves and to make a Christian provision for them prior to manumission, yet in 1760 there were still Quaker slave-owners in Pennsylvania. By 1776, however, nearly all of the Quakers had freed their slaves and in 1780 there were no Pennsylvania Quakers who had not emancipated them.[1]

The opposition to slavery among the Quakers in Pennsylvania was engendered by religious scruples and was also due to the fact that they could not be profitably employed there in agriculture. Slaves were used chiefly as house servants; a few were artisans and a small number farm laborers. Without plantations and plantation crops Pennsylvanians found by experience that slavery did not pay. The Quakers were induced to discontinue it on that account as well as for religious reasons.

Hostility towards slavery found expression in laws passed by the colonial assemblies in this colony at an early date because a majority of their members were Quakers. In 1700 a duty of ten shillings per head was levied on all slaves imported, and six years later the importation of Indian slaves was prohibited. Heartless and unscrupulous masters, some of them Quakers, frequently emancipated aged slaves who could no longer be profitably employed. In such cases aged freed negroes were often unable to support themselves and consequently became a burden on society. To remedy this abuse the Assembly passed

[1] E. R. Turner, op. cit., p. 92. Turner also makes the statement that "By 1780 more than half of the negroes in Pennsylvania were free." The example of the Quakers in emancipating their slaves was followed by a considerable number of non-Quaker slave-owners.

a law in 1725 to compel each master who freed a slave to deposit thirty pounds in the court of the county where he resided as an emergency fund for the support of the negro in case the latter became unable to care for himself.[1] In 1761 another act provided for the registration of negroes brought into the colony and for the payment of a duty of ten pounds on each slave imported for sale.[2] This duty was raised to twenty pounds in 1773.[3] On March 1, 1780, the state legislature passed a law for the gradual emancipation of slaves. Children of slave parents born after the passage of this act were to be free but their masters were permitted to command their services until they were twenty-eight years old at which time they became free. Pennsylvania was the first state to abolish slavery by a legislative act.

Franklin took no part in the passage of these acts. He was a member of the Assembly from 1751-1764 but was in England as colonial agent when the act of March 14, 1761, was passed, and he was not a member of the Assembly when the older laws referred to were enacted. He was certainly in sympathy with the acts of 1761 and 1773 and in the capacity of colonial agent probably used his influence to secure the British Government's approval of them.

Franklin's first connection with the abolition move-

[1] *Acts of Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1775), "An Act for the better regulating of Negroes in this Province," pp. 143-145.

[2] Ibid., pp. 284-288. This act was in force when Franklin was examined before the House of Commons relative to the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766. See his answer to the question regarding taxes in Pennsylvania, Franklin (Smyth), IV, 413.

[3] Ibid., p. 492.

ment in Pennsylvania is told in his letter to John Wright, Philadelphia, November 4, 1789: "I wish success to your endeavours for obtaining an abolition of the Slave Trade. The epistle from your Yearly Meeting, for the year 1758, was not the *first sowing* of the good seed you mention; for I find by an old pamphlet in my possession, that George Keith,[1] near a hundred years since, wrote a paper against the practice, said to be 'given forth by the appointment of the meeting held by him, at Philip James's house, in the city of Philadelphia, about the year 1693;' wherein a strict charge was given to Friends, 'that they should set their negroes at liberty, after some reasonable time of service, &c.&c.' And about the year 1728, or 1729, I myself printed a book for Ralph Sandyford,[2] another of your Friends in this city, against keeping negroes in slavery; two editions of which he distributed gratis. And about the year 1736, I printed another book [3] on the same subject for Benjamin Lay, who also professed being one of your Friends, and he distributed the books chiefly among them. By these

[1] *An Exhortation & Caution to Friends concerning buying or keeping of Negroes* (New York, 1693), published by George Keith and his Quaker Followers.

[2] *A Brief Examination of the Practice of the Times, . . .* by Ralph Sandiford. Printed by Franklin and Meredith (Philadelphia, 1729). Although threatened with violence by slave-owners Sandiford distributed two editions of this pamphlet.

[3] *All Slave-Keepers that keep the Innocent in Bondage . . .* by Benjamin Lay, printed by Franklin (Philadelphia, 1737). Lay aided Sandiford financially in printing the latter's pamphlet and also in distributing copies. The following interesting entry appears in Franklin's Account Book: "Ralph Sandiford Cr. for Cash receiv'd of Benja Lay for 50 of his Books which he intends to give away . . . 10" (shillings). For another reference to Franklin's connection with Lay see Excerpts from the Papers of Dr. Benjamin Rush. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* (1905), XXIX, 25.

instances it appears, that the seed was indeed sown in the good ground of your profession, although much earlier than the time you mention, and its springing up to effect at last, though so late, is some confirmation of Lord Bacon's observations, that *a good motion never dies;* and it may encourage us in making such, though hopeless of their taking immediate effect." [1]

Ralph Sandiford and Benjamin Lay were active early abolitionists in Pennsylvania. They wrote and distributed pamphlets and used their personal influence to create public sympathy for the negro slave. Franklin was genuinely in favor of their cause. He printed their pamphlets at the risk of incurring the hostility of slave-owners who disliked these men and their activities. The Assembly in 1730 had made him and his partner, Hugh Meredith, public printers of the province.[2] On October 15, 1736, Franklin was appointed Clerk of the Assembly and in the following year he became postmaster of Philadelphia. His continuance in the capacities of public printer and Clerk of the Assembly depended on the favor of the Assembly in which many of the members were opposed to abolition. As a matter of caution and self-protection he did not attach his name to Lay's pamphlet (1737) to indicate that he was the printer. While he was postmaster of Philadelphia 1737-1753 he aided

[1] Franklin (Smyth), X, 61-62.

[2] The Assembly appointed Franklin and Meredith to print the minutes January 29, 1730. The partnership was dissolved July 14, 1730. From this time until 1748 Franklin was public printer, and from 1748-1764 Franklin and Hall had this appointment.

the abolitionists in the distribution of their pamphlets.[1] In 1762 when he was securely established politically and financially he and his business partner, David Hall, printed the second part of *Considerations on Keeping Negroes* (1762) by John Woolman, the well-known Quaker abolitionist. In these ways Franklin first aided the abolitionist cause.

Like many well-to-do Pennsylvanians, Franklin was a slave-owner. In 1750 he had two slaves, a man whom he hired out at a shilling a week to the manager of his Dutch printing office and the negro's wife who was employed as a house-servant in Franklin's home. Franklin, however, did not like negro servants, for he wrote his mother that he planned to sell both of his slaves "the first good opportunity" that offered.[2] Mrs. Franklin employed negro house servants. In a letter of 1760 to his wife Franklin writes, "I am sorry for the death of your black boy, as you seem to have had a regard for him. You must have suffered a good deal in the fatigue of nursing him in such a distemper."[3] Franklin's son-in-law, Richard Bache,[4] is known to have kept at least one slave, for Franklin's will contains[5] the provision that he desired to cancel Bache's indebtedness to him, to the amount of £2,175.5.0 in consideration of the latter freeing his negro man, Bob.[6]

[1] Probably also from 1753-1774 when he was Postmaster General of America.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), III, 3-4.

[3] Ibid., IV, 88.

[4] Richard Bache married Franklin's daughter, Sarah, October 29, 1767.

[5] Franklin made his will prior to his departure for France in the fall of 1776.

[6] Franklin (Smyth), X, 495.

Franklin's essay, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries,* &c. (1751), attacked slavery from an economic standpoint. " 'Tis an ill-grounded Opinion," he wrote, "that by the Labour of slaves, *America* may possibly vie in Cheapness of Manufacture with *Britain.* The Labour of Slaves can never be so cheap here as the Labour of working Men is in *Britain.* Anyone may compute it. Interest of Money is in the Colonies from 6 to 10 per Cent. Slaves one with another cost 30£ Sterling per Head. Reckon then the Interest of the first Purchase of a Slave, the Insurance or Risque on his Life, his Cloathing and Diet, Expences in his Sickness and Loss of Time, Loss by his neglect of Business (Neglect is natural to the Man who is not to be benefited by his own Care or Diligence), Expence of a Driver to keep him at Work, and his Pilfering from Time to Time, almost every slave being *by Nature* a Thief, and compare the whole Amount with the Wages of a Manufacturer of Iron or Wool in *England,* you will see that Labour is much cheaper there than it ever can be by Negroes here. Why then will *Americans* purchase Slaves? Because Slaves may be kept as long as a *Man* pleases, or has occasion for their Labour; while hired Men are continually leaving their masters (often in the midst of his Business) and setting up for themselves." [1]

In the same essay he pointed out that the introduc-

[1] Franklin (Smyth), III, 66-67. Anne Robert Jacques Turgot who headed the first Ministry of Louis XVI's reign refers to this passage of Franklin's essay in a letter to Du Pont de Nemours, Limoges, February 6, 1770. See *Oeuvres de Turgot* (edited by Gustave Schelle), III, 375.

tion of slaves would diminish the white population of a country. "The Negroes brought into the *English* Sugar *Islands* have greatly diminish'd the Whites there; the Poor are by this Means deprived of Employment, while a few Families acquire vast Estates; which they spend on Foreign Luxuries, and educating their Children in the habit of those Luxuries; the same Income is needed for the Support of one that might have maintain'd 100. The Whites who have Slaves, not labouring, are enfeebled, and therefore not so generally prolific; the Slaves being work'd too hard, and ill fed, their Constitutions are broken, and the Deaths among them are more than the births; so that a continual Supply is needed from *Africa.* The Northern Colonies, having few Slaves, increase in Whites. Slaves also pejorate [1] the families that use them; the white Children become proud, disgusted with Labour, and being educated in Idleness, are rendered unfit to get a Living by Industry." [2]

Franklin recognized the principle that population was limited by means of subsistence. He realized the possibilities which America afforded for rapidly increasing her population, and he desired to see the country inhabited by "purely white people," Saxons and English, instead of "Blacks and Tawneys." [3]

"Dr. Bray's Associates," as has been pointed out,

[1] i.e., to weaken or enfeeble.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), III, 68.

[3] Ibid., III, 72-73. Franklin apparently considered the "English" and Saxons as the only pure white people. The Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians, Germans (the Saxons excepted) and the Swedes, Franklin said, "are generally of what we call a swarthy complexion"; and other peoples of the world "Blacks and Tawneys."

elected Franklin a member of their society in 1760 during which year he acted as its chairman.[1] This group of individuals realized that Franklin was in sympathy with its aims and was at this time making plans to open a school for negroes in America. In 1776 his advice was requested in regard to the investment of £1000 in American lands, the profits and rents from which the members proposed to apply to the support of schools for negro children. Franklin advised "Dr. Bray's Associates" to appoint three trustees to purchase lands in or near Philadelphia "as bargains may offer." Following this suggestion a piece of land was subsequently purchased on Market Street, Philadelphia. In 1783 Anthony Benezet apparently began to teach negroes in Philadelphia,[2] but by 1785 "Dr. Bray's Associates" had not yet built a school in the city.[3]

About the year 1771 Franklin began to use his influence in England to secure the British government's coöperation with the colonies in restricting the importation of slaves into America.[4] On April 27, 1772, Anthony Benezet, the Quaker abolitionist, wrote Franklin from Philadelphia requesting him to

[1] Letter to Mrs. Deborah Franklin, London, June 27, 1760. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 23.

[2] Letter of Benezet to Franklin, May 5, 1783. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 59.

[3] Letter from the Associates of Dr. Bray, October 4, 1785. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 278. In 1785 the Society sent Franklin their proceedings for the year 1784 and a book prepared for distribution among the negroes.

[4] See letter from Noble Wimberly Jones, Savannah, July 8, 1771. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 123.

endeavour to secure the abolition of the slave trade. Benezet had sent tracts[1] against slavery to Franklin and to influential Friends in London asking the latter if they did not consider it their duty to lay the subject before Parliament. He gave his estimate of the number of slaves in the British colonies and stated that many in New England and also in Virginia would favor and lend their support to any measure which would reform the slave trade.[2]

During the first half of the year 1772, Granville Sharp, the most active of the London abolitionists, was strenuously endeavoring to secure the freedom of the negro slave, James Sommersett, who had been brought by his master from Virginia to England where he ran away but was later apprehended. When Sommersett's master was about to send him to Jamaica, Sharp procured a writ of habeas corpus to secure his release. A hearing on the writ was held before Lord Chief Justice Mansfield in December, 1771. After three hearings, Mansfield, rendering the decision of the Court of the King's Bench, declared in substance that as soon as a negro set his foot on the soil of England he became free. This decision was a great personal victory for Sharp as well as for the abolitionist cause, for slavery was said to be repug-

[1] In 1767 Benezet published at Philadelphia his *Caution and Warning to Great-Britain and her Colonies in a short Representation of the calamitous State of the enslaved Negroes in the British Dominions* (Philadelphia, 1767). Another pamphlet, *Some Historical Account of Guinea. . . . With an inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave-Trade, its Nature and lamentable Effects*, was published at Philadelphia in 1771.

[2] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 132.

nant to the spirit of the common law and to have no legal justification in the positive law of England.[1]

While the decision in the Sommersett case indicated that the British courts would not protect a master's claim to property rights in a slave imported into England, it did not in any way end the practice of importing slaves into the British colonies. Franklin watched the proceedings in this case with keen interest. He especially desired that Parliament should pass a law to prohibit the slave trade and to emancipate all the slaves of the British Empire. As soon as Mansfield rendered the court's decision in the Sommersett case Franklin began to agitate for parliamentary action along these lines. He inserted the following interesting article in the *London Chronicle* of June 18-20, 1772, just two days before Sommersett finally obtained his freedom: [2]

"It is said that some generous humane persons subscribed to the expence of obtaining liberty by law for Sommerset the Negro.—It is to be wished that the same humanity may extend itself among numbers; if not to the procuring liberty for those that remain in our Colonies, at least to obtain a law for abolishing the African commerce in Slaves, and declaring the children of present Slaves free after they become of age.

"By a late computation made in America, it appears that there are now eight hundred and fifty

[1] See Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 555-556, and the article on Sharp by A. F. Pollard in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, LI, 401-402.

[2] Sommersett obtained his freedom June 22, 1772.

thousand Negroes in the English Islands and Colonies; and that the yearly importation is about one hundred thousand, of which number about one third perish by the gaol distemper on the passage, and in the sickness called the *seasoning* before they are set to labour.[1] The remnant makes up the deficiencies continually occurring among the main body of those unhappy people, through the distempers occasioned by excessive labour, bad nourishment, uncomfortable accommodation, and broken spirits. Can sweetening our tea, &c. with sugar, be a circumstance of such absolute necessity? Can the petty pleasure thence arising to the taste, compensate for so much misery produced among our fellow creatures, and such a constant butchery of the human species by this pestilential detestable traffic in the bodies and souls of men?—*Pharisaical Britain!* to pride thyself in setting free *a single Slave* that happens to land on thy coasts, while thy Merchants in all thy ports are encouraged by the law to continue a commerce whereby so many *hundreds of thousands* are dragged into a slavery that can scarce be said to end with their lives, since it is entailed on their posterity!" [2]

On February 10, 1773, Franklin wrote Anthony Benezet, "I have commenced an Acquaintance with Mr. Granville Sharp, and we shall act in Concert in the Affair of Slavery." [3] Both men were interested in the abolition of negro slavery as well as in the cause

[1] Franklin obtained these figures from Anthony Benezet's letter of April 27, 1772, referred to above. See his letter to Benezet, August 22, 1772. Franklin (Smyth), V, 431-432.

[2] *London Chronicle*, XXXI, 592.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), VI, 9.

of the American colonies in their struggle against the tyrannical measures of the British government which brought on the American Revolution.[1] Franklin was chiefly occupied until 1775 in attempting to bring about a reconciliation between Great Britain and her rebellious colonies. His interest in the slavery question at this time was naturally subordinate to his interest in other American problems. He did find time, however, as his correspondence during these years indicates, to continue his protests against slavery.

In April, 1773, he wrote Richard Woodward, "I have since had the Satisfaction to learn that a Disposition to abolish Slavery prevails in North America, that many of the Pennsylvanians have set their Slaves at Liberty, and that even the Virginia Assembly have petitioned the King for Permission to make a Law for preventing the Importation of more into that Colony. This Request, however, will probably not be granted, as their former Laws of that kind have always been repealed, and as the Interest of a few Merchants here has more weight with Government, than that of Thousands at a Distance." [2]

At this time the American colonists were generally hostile to the importation of slaves. Even in the South leading public men like Patrick Henry, Thomas

[1] In 1774 Sharp published *A Declaration of the People's Natural Right to a Share in the Legislature*, in which he argued that the colonists were entitled to representation in Parliament. He resigned his position in the Ordnance Department July 31, 1776, because he refused to assist in sending war materials to be used against the American colonists.

[2] Letter to Dean Richard Woodward, London, April 10, 1773. Franklin (Smyth), VI, 39. Woodward was Dean of Clogher in Ireland from 1764 until 1781. He was deeply interested in the relief of the poor in Ireland and also in the abolition of slavery. See E. Irving Carlyle's article on Woodward in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, LXII, 425-426.

Jefferson and George Washington condemned this practice. The colonists were fighting against the oppressive measures of the British Government and were probably conscious that their oppression of the negro was in a measure as unjust as Britain's oppression of themselves.[1]

Dr. Benjamin Rush, the eminent Quaker physician of Philadelphia, wrote Franklin in regard to the prohibition of the slave trade May 1, 1773, and sent a pamphlet of his against the practice.[2] Benezet continued to send pamphlets and to urge Franklin to do all that was within his power to curtail the trade in slaves.[3] An extract from the Board of Trade's Journals shows that Franklin was consulted by members of the Board May 5, 1774, in regard to the attitude of the colonies if duties amounting to a prohibition were laid upon the importation of negroes.[4] During the same year Granville Sharp sent Franklin an extract of a letter to a Mr. Pecuezet [Benezet?] concerning the gradual enfranchisement of slaves already in the colonies.[5]

On May 5, 1775, Franklin arrived in America having returned from England, and on the following day the Pennsylvania Assembly elected him to the Conti-

[1] Channing, *History of the United States*, III, 556-557. The Southerners were of course aware of the fact that agriculture carried on with slave labor resulted in great economic waste. Many plantations were overstocked with slaves and the problem of keeping them became a matter of serious concern to their masters.

[2] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 147. For Franklin's reply to Dr. Rush see Franklin (Smyth), VI, 100.

[3] See letter to Benezet, July 14, 1773. Franklin (Smyth), VI, 102.

[4] E. R. Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania*, p. 7, note.

[5] See *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 167. The date of this letter from Sharp is uncertain. It was probably written in 1774.

nental Congress. During a debate in this body July 30, 1776, Samuel Chase of Maryland moved that the word "white" be inserted in the eleventh article of the Articles of Confederation.[1] The original draft of the eleventh article provided that all charges of wars be borne by the several colonies according to their respective population. In ascertaining the population of a colony, people of both sexes, black as well as white, but no Indians not paying taxes were to be counted. The Southerners felt the injustice of this method of levying taxes because the Southern colonies had large slave populations and most of them taxed slaves as property. Hence it appeared to them as if the distribution of the tax burden was unjust and unequal. Thomas Lynch of South Carolina according to John Adams' notes of the debates asked, "Our slaves being our property, why should they be taxed more than the land, sheep, cattle, horses, &c.?" In answer to this question Adams quotes Franklin as having made the following answer: "Slaves rather weaken than strengthen the State, and there is therefore some difference between them and sheep; sheep will never make any insurrections." He was outspokenly opposed to slavery and in favor of each state bearing its share of taxation on the basis of its total population of negroes, whites and tax-paying Indians.[2]

The first abolition society in America, "The

[1] *The Works of John Adams* (Ed. by Charles F. Adams), II, 496.

[2] Chase's amendment failed to pass August 1, 1776. Seven of the Northern colonies voted against it. The votes of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina were in favor and those of Georgia were divided.

Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, for the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race," was organized April 14, 1775, at Philadelphia largely through the efforts of James Pemberton and Dr. Benjamin Rush. This Society was formed less than a month before Franklin returned to America from England. Whether, during his stay in America from May 5, 1775, until October 29, 1776, he was in any way associated with this organization,[1] is not known. His remarks on slavery during the debates in the Continental Congress, July 30, 1776, indicated that he was hostile to the institution. The Quakers, who held a majority in the Pennsylvania Assembly which elected Franklin to Congress in 1775, had by this time nearly all emancipated their slaves. The sentiment of the people in the colony in 1776 was strongly opposed to slavery and Franklin's remarks in Congress expressed the attitude of his constituents on this question.

On October 29, 1776, Franklin left America as United States' commissioner to France to secure that country's assistance in the American revolutionary war against Great Britain. During his stay in France (December, 1776-July, 1785) he was too busily occupied with all his diplomatic duties to give much attention to slavery. On several occasions during this period, however, he expressed views which indicate that he continued to oppose the institution. In a

[1] This Society, as has been previously noted, was reorganized in 1784. In 1787 it adopted a new constitution and a different name, "The Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery."

letter to James Lovell, Passy, October 17, 1779, he wrote, "I send you with this, a Piece written by a learned Friend of mine on the Taxation of Free States, which I imagine may give you some Pleasure. Also a late Royal Edict, for abolishing the remains of slavery in this Kingdom. Who would have thought, a few years since, that we should live to see a king of France giving freedom to Slaves, while a king of England is endeavoring to make Slaves of Freemen." [1]

In his *Propositions relative to Privateering, communicated to Mr. Oswald,* January 14, 1783, appears the following comment on the African slave trade and on the economic losses sustained by France and England in their wars to secure possession of the West Indian sugar islands: "A celebrated philosophical writer remarks, that, when he considered the wars made in Africa, for prisoners to raise sugars in America, the numbers slain in those wars, the numbers that, being crowded into ships, perish in the transportation, and the numbers that die under the severities of slavery, he could scarce look on a morsel of sugar without conceiving it spotted with human blood. If he had considered also the blood of one another, which the white nations shed in fighting for those islands, he would have imagined his sugar not as spotted only, but as thoroughly dyed red. On these accounts I am persuaded, that the subjects of the Emperor of Germany, and the Empress of Russia, who

[1] Franklin (Smyth), VII, 402. Franklin in 1783 told Sir Samuel Romilly at Paris that if the slave trade had not been encouraged by the British Board of Trade it would then have been abolished everywhere in the United States. See passage of Bayne's *Journal* in Franklin (Bigelow), VIII, 412.

have no sugar islands, consume sugar cheaper at Vienna, and Moscow, with all the charge of transporting it after its arrival in Europe, than the citizens of London or of Paris. And I sincerely believe, that if France and England were to decide, by throwing dice, which should have the whole of their sugar islands, the loser in the throw would be the gainer." [1]

Messrs. Sears and Smith, a New York mercantile house, wrote Franklin in May, 1784, and October, 1785, requesting him to use his influence with the French government to secure a refund of a sum of money which a captain of one of their ships had been forced to pay on a cargo of slaves which he had imported from Africa and sold in the French island of Martinique. Franklin wrote this firm August 4, 1784, to the effect, "that by an *arrêt du Conseil d'Etat du Roi,* of the 28th. of June, 1783, there is a Duty laid, of 100 Livres per head, on all Negroes imported in foreign Ships, and this Duty is granted and is to be paid as a Premium to the French Importers of Negroes, as an Encouragement to their own African Trade. Under these circumstances I am advis'd, that it cannot be expected that a general national Law should be set aside in favour of a particular foreign Ship; especially as the King, if he forgives the Duty to the Stranger, must thereby do Injustice to his own Subjects, to whom he had promised the Produce of that Duty, unless he pays it to them out of his own Money, which we cannot decently request him to do.

[1] Letter to Richard Oswald, Passy, January 14, 1783. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 6.

I do not, therefore, see any Possibility of your avoiding the Payment." [1] When one realizes Franklin's hostility towards the slave trade it is not hard to believe that he did not busy himself to aid these merchants in securing a refund of the duty paid on slaves they had imported and sold in Martinique. Franklin, no doubt, also realized that the revocation of the edict of the King's Council would give Sears [2] and Smith and other American merchants interested in the West Indian trade a wider market in which to dispose of slaves. More than once before he had vehemently condemned this abominable traffic in human beings and he certainly had no desire then to aid American slave dealers in promoting it.

On Franklin's voyage home to America in August, 1785, he wrote *Maritime Observations* in which he indulged in some general philosophic reflections on the subject of navigation: "Navigation, when employed in supplying necessary provisions to a country in want, and thereby preventing famines, which were more frequent and destructive before the invention of that art, is undoubtedly a blessing to mankind. When employed merely in transporting superfluities, it is a question whether the advantage of the employment it affords is equal to the mischief of hazarding

[1] See letter to Messrs. Sears and Smith, August 4, 1784, and also that of November 14, 1785. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 249, 475. For letters of Sears and Smith to Franklin see *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 280, 542, 551.

[2] Isaac Sears (1729-1786) was engaged in the West Indian trade. His firm had its headquarters in New York and a branch in Boston. In 1783, he became a member of the New York provincial Congress and also of the Assembly. The Revolution ruined him financially and in 1785 he became a supercargo on a merchant ship bound for China. He died at Canton, China, on his first trip.

so many lives on the ocean. But when employed in pillaging merchants and transporting slaves, it is clearly the means of augmenting the mass of human misery." [1]

The *Retort Courteous,* written by Franklin about 1786, answered British complaints against Americans because of their slowness in paying debts owed to British merchants since the Revolution began. Among the reasons given by Franklin for the failure of the people of the Carolinas and Virginia to pay their debts was that the slave merchants of British Guinea had sold them slaves before the American Revolution. During the war, Franklin asserted that the British incited these slaves to "cut the throats of their purchasers and resort to the British army, where they should be rewarded with freedom. This was done, and the planters were thus deprived of near thirty thousand of their working people." [2] The shortage of labor occasioned by the loss of these slaves in this way, according to Franklin, was one of the reasons why the Virginians and Carolinians did not pay their debts to the British.

In 1787 Franklin was elected President of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. In this capacity during the three years before his death he was especially active in the aboli-

[1] See letter to David Leroy, *Maritime Observations,* At Sea, on board the London Packet, Capt. Truxton, August, 1785. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 403-404. In the latter part of this letter Franklin repeats observations on the West Indian slave and sugar trade similar to those he wrote to Richard Oswald in 1783. See Franklin (Smyth), IX, 6.

[2] The *Retort Courteous,* Franklin (Smyth), X, 111. The probable date of this essay is 1786.

tionist movement. The sentiments of members of this society are well shown in the preamble of its new constitution of 1787: "It having pleased the Creator of the world, to make of one flesh, all the children of men—it becomes them to consult and promote each other's happiness, as members of the same family, however diversified they may be, by colour, situation, religion, or different states of society. It is more especially the duty of those persons, who profess to maintain for themselves the rights of human nature, and who acknowledge the obligations of Christianity, to use such means as are in their power, to extend the blessings of freedom to every part of the human race; and in a more particular manner, to such of their fellow-creatures, as are entitled to freedom by the laws and constitutions of any of the United States, and who, notwithstanding, are detained in bondage, by fraud or violence.—From a full conviction of the truth and obligations of these principles—from a desire to diffuse them, wherever the miseries and vices of slavery exist, and in humble confidence of the favour and support of the Father of Mankind, the subscribers have associated themselves under the title of the "Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of slavery, and the relief of the free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage." [1]

The society corresponded with other societies and with persons who were thought to be in sympathy with its aims and objects. Four counsellors were

[1] *The Constitution of the Pennsylvania Society, for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and the Relief of Free Negroes, unlawfully held in Bondage.* Philadelphia, 1787, p. 5.

chosen to explain the provisions in the state constitutions and the state laws relating to slavery and to urge and assist all persons who were legally entitled to emancipation to obtain their freedom. Foreigners and residents of other states were permitted to become corresponding members,[1] but no slave holder could become a member. Provisions were made for regular meetings of the society in January, April, July and October, and for special meetings when they were necessary.

Most of the supporters of the society were Quakers. This element of Pennsylvania's population had chiefly sponsored the state abolition law of March 1, 1780, of which Judge George Bryan was the author.[2] Emancipation in Pennsylvania progressed fairly rapidly. When the Revolution began there were about 6000 slaves in the state. In 1790, ten years after the passage of the abolition law, there were less than 4000.[3]

The Pennsylvania abolition law of 1780, as has been noted, provided that children of slave parents, who were born after its passage, were to be free although their masters might compel them to work until they became twenty-eight years of age at which time they became absolutely free. The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery sought to en-

[1] Granville Sharp and Dr. Richard Price, intimate English friends of Franklin, were elected corresponding members. Josiah Wedgwood, the British pottery manufacturer, in 1788, sent Franklin and his friends a few cameos, the subject of which was the abolition of slavery.

[2] See Burton A. Konkle, *George Bryan and the Constitution of Pennsylvania 1731-1791*, p. 195 ff. and p. 195, note 1.

[3] Ibid., pp. 197-198.

force the observance of this law in the state. Slave-owners were no doubt inclined through self-interest to allow ignorant negroes to continue working for them after they were legally entitled to freedom. The society interested itself in the enforcement of the law in such cases as well as in assisting free negroes to retain their freedom. The society also paid masters to free their slaves, found employment for them and assumed the responsibility of caring for negroes whose masters had been induced to emancipate them.

The society's first work was to attack the slave trade, a practice which American merchants began to engage in as soon as the treaty of peace with Great Britain was concluded. The society drew up a memorial which was sent to the Federal Constitutional Convention in 1787. In May of that year Franklin was elected a delegate to this convention. He was then eighty-one years of age and very feeble and therefore took but little part in the debates. His rôle in this body was chiefly that of the conciliator who sought to induce the various contending parties to compromise their differences. A statement of James Wilson, also a delegate from Pennsylvania, probably voiced Franklin's sentiments in regard to section 9 of article 1 of the federal constitution which forbade Congress to legislate against the importation of slaves prior to 1808: "I consider this as laying the foundation for banishing slavery out of this country; and though the period is more distant than I could wish, yet it will produce the same kind, gradual change, which was pursued in Pennsylvania." [1] James Par-

[1] Livermore, *An Historical Research*, pp. 88-89.

ton, Franklin's best biographer, says, "Benjamin Franklin was an abolitionist; but he felt it to be his duty to assent to the compromises of the Constitution, rather than see the Confederation broken up, and the malign predictions of European ill-wishers so speedily fulfilled." [1] On September 17, 1787, Franklin rose with a written speech in his hand to implore the members of the convention to sign the constitution. Being too feeble to read it, James Wilson did so for him. The first sentence sums up his attitude on the importance of accepting the constitution as it had been drawn: "I confess that there are several parts of this constitution which I do not at present approve, but I am not sure I shall never approve them." [2] One of these parts of the constitution of which he probably did not approve, but for which he voted, was section 9 of article 1.

The Federal Constitutional Convention adjourned September 17, 1787. From October 17, 1785, until November 5, 1788,[3] Franklin was President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania and during almost the same period of time Councillor for Philadelphia.[4] The last five years of his life were spent in the performance of his duties as President of Pennsylvania and as President of the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery.

America took the lead in an international movement for the abolition of slavery and the slave trade,

[1] James Parton, *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (1897), II, 578.
[2] *Documentary History of the Constitution of the United States of America*, III, 761.
[3] On account of ill health Franklin resigned November 5, 1788.
[4] He was Councillor of Philadelphia, October 17, 1785-October 17, 1788.

and the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, composed chiefly of Quakers and largely supported by this sect, played a conspicuous part in this movement. On May 22, 1787, a committee under the presidency of Granville Sharp was formed in England to agitate for the abolition of the slave trade. The members of this committee collected facts about slavery, secured petitions against it, formed branch committees, supplied information and gave their support to members of Parliament who fought against the practice. Such influential men as Josiah Wedgwood, Bennet Langton, Zachary Macaulay, Henry Brougham and James Stephen were active in the abolition movement in England. Granville Sharp and Josiah Wedgwood were friends of Franklin. The former wrote him January 10, 1788, setting forth his objections to section 9 of article 1 of the United States Constitution which forbade Congress to restrict the importation of slaves prior to 1808.[1] Wedgwood, as has been noted, sent Franklin and his friends cameos, the subject of which was an anti-slavery protest.

In 1785 an Abolition Society similar to the one in Pennsylvania was formed in New York under the presidency of John Jay. The latter corresponded with Granville Sharp and Dr. Richard Price upon the work of the different abolition societies.[2] In 1788 the *Société des Amis des Noirs* was formed at Paris for the abolition of slavery and the trade in slaves.

[1] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 364.
[2] *Jay Papers*, III, 159, 168, 329.

The President of this society was Franklin's friend, Condorcet. Several of his friends, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Count Mirabeau, Lafayette, Brissot de Warville and Pétion were founders of this society. The men who belonged to these societies in America, England and France were engaged in a common cause and frequently corresponded with each other.[1]

In 1788 petitions from the Pennsylvania Society induced the state legislature to pass a law imposing a penalty of 1,000 pounds on a person who imported slaves into the state. Franklin was President of Pennsylvania and approved of this measure.

In 1788 Franklin wrote the following letter to John Langdon, President of the state of New Hampshire:

"*Sir:*

The Pennsylvania Society for promoting the abolition of slavery, and the relief of free Negroes unlawfully held in bondage, have taken the liberty to ask your Excellency's acceptance of a few copies of their Constitution and the laws of Pennsylvania, which relate to one of the objects of their Institution; also, of a copy of Thomas Clarkson's excellent Essay upon the Commerce and Slavery of the Africans.[2]

The Society have heard, with great [regret], that a considerable part of the slaves, who have been sold in the

[1] M. Gramaguac in a letter to Franklin, Paris, April 17, 1789, on the part of the *Société des Amis Noirs*, sent copies of various discourses, letters, and a list of the society's members. He promised to keep Franklin informed in regard to the society's work. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 387.

[2] Thomas Clarkson obtained the first prize offered by the University of Cambridge in 1785 for the best Latin essay against the slave trade. Clarkson translated his essay into English, expanded it, and in 1786 published it under the title, *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species*. He made friends with many prominent opponents of the slave trade such as Sharp, William Dillwyn and Rev. James Ramsay.

Southern States since the establishment of peace, have been imported in vessels fitted out in the state, over which, your Excellency presides. From your Excellency's station, they hope your influence will be exerted, hereafter, to prevent a practice which is so evidently repugnant to the political principles and form of government lately adopted by citizens of the United States, and which cannot fail of delaying the enjoyment of the blessings of peace and liberty, by drawing down, the displeasure of the great and impartial Ruler of the Universe upon our country.

I am, in behalf of the Society,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

To His Excellency J. LANGDON, ESQ." [1]

On November 9, 1789, Franklin drew up and signed *An Address to the Public* [2] on behalf of his Society. This is an impassioned appeal for the emancipation of slaves, the education of their children and a request to the public to contribute money to carry on the Society's good work; also to furnish employment for freed negroes.

Franklin was largely responsible for drafting the *Plan for Improving the Condition of the Free Blacks* which contains the best brief account of the Society's methods of assisting the negro:

"The business relative to free blacks shall be transacted by a committee of twenty-four persons, annually elected by ballot, at the meeting of this Society,

[1] From *The Historical Magazine*, III (April, 1859), 120. John Langdon to whom this letter was addressed was President of New Hampshire, June, 1788, to January 22, 1789, and on March 4, 1789, became United States senator from New Hampshire. The letter given in *The Historical Magazine* bears no date. It was probably written to Langdon in 1788.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), X, 66-68.

in the month called April; and, in order to perform the different services with expedition, regularity, and energy, this committee shall resolve itself into the following sub-committees, viz.

I. A Committee of Inspection, who shall superintend the morals, general conduct, and ordinary situation of the free negroes, and afford them advice and instruction, protection from wrongs, and other friendly offices.

II. A Committee of Guardians, who shall place out children and young people with suitable persons, that they may (during a moderate time of apprenticeship or servitude) learn some trade or other business of subsistence. The committee may effect this partly by a persuasive influence on parents and the persons concerned, and partly by coöperating with the laws, which are, or may be, enacted for this and similar purposes. In forming contracts on these occasions, the committee shall secure to the Society, as far as may be practicable, the right of guardianship over the persons so bound.

III. A Committee of Education who shall superintend the school instruction of the children and youth of the free blacks. They may influence them to attend regularly the schools already established in this city, or form others with this view; they shall, in either case, provide, that the pupils may receive such learning as is necessary for their future situation in life, and especially a deep impression of the most important and generally acknowledged moral and religious principles. They shall also procure and pre-

serve a regular record of the marriages, births and manumissions of all free blacks.

IV. A Committee of Employ, who shall endeavour to procure constant employment for those free negroes who are able to work; as the want of this would occasion poverty, idleness, and many vicious habits. This committee will, by sedulous inquiry, be enabled to find common labour for a great number; they will also provide, that such as indicate proper talents may learn various trades, which may be done by prevailing upon them to bind themselves for such a term of years as shall compensate their masters for the expense and trouble of instruction and maintenance. The committee may attempt the institution of some useful and simple manufactures, which require but little skill, and also may assist, in commencing business, such as appear to be qualified for it.

Whenever the committee of inspection shall find persons of any particular description requiring attention, they shall immediately direct them to the committee of whose care they are the proper objects.

In matters of a mixed nature, the committee shall confer, and, if necessary act in concert. Affairs of great importance shall be referred to the whole committee.

The expense, incurred by the prosecution of this plan, shall be defrayed by a fund, to be formed by donations or subscriptions for these particular purposes, and to be kept separate from the other funds of this Society.

The committee shall make a report of their pro-

ceedings, and of the state of their stock, to the Society, at their quarterly meetings, in the months called April and October." [1]

On February 12, 1790, a petition from the Quaker Yearly Meeting for the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, western Maryland, western Virginia, seconded by another from New York was presented to Congress asking that the slave trade be abolished.[2] On the next day the Pennsylvania Society for the promoting the Abolition of Slavery also presented a similar petition signed by Dr. Franklin, February 3, 1790.[3]

These petitions caused a stir in Congress. Slavery was debated and also the question whether Congress had the power to consider the subject. The memorials were referred to a committee which made a report to Congress. The subject of the Congressional resolution of March 23, 1790, on this report is as follows:

"1. That the General Government was prohibited from interfering with the slave trade for the domestic supply until 1808. Congress might lay a tax of $10 on the importation.

"2. That Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in the states, either to emancipate or to regu-

[1] Franklin (Smyth), X, 127-129.

[2] See Washington's diary, February 12, 1790. *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. XX (1896), p. 50 and note 2. W. S. Baker in this note says that the Pennsylvania Society's petition was presented the next day, i.e., February 13. Smyth quotes Dr. Stuber who erroneously gave the date, February 12, 1789 (see Franklin (Smyth), X, 86).

[3] James A. Woodburn in an article, "The Historical Significance of the Missouri Compromise," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association*, 1893, pp. 251-252, says that the petition of the Quaker Yearly Meeting was presented to Congress February 11, 1790.

late the treatment of slaves. It remains alone with the several states to regulate their internal and domestic institutions.

"3. That Congress could prevent the slave trade for foreign supply." [1]

This statement by Congress defining the extent of its constitutional power regarding slavery was accepted by Franklin and by the American public generally.

During the course of the debates occasioned by the petitions of the Quakers and that of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery, Mr. Jackson, congressman from Georgia, cast some acrimonious aspersions on the Quakers because of their attitude on the slavery question. He asked "Is the whole morality of the United States confined to Quakers?" and chided the Quakers for the small part they played in the Revolution by which the United States gained its independence. Jackson furthermore asserted that slavery was commended in the Bible. He asked if those who were desirous of freeing the negroes had sufficient funds to pay for them.

Franklin's last public act was to write a clever parody on Jackson's speech which he addressed in the form of a letter, bearing the date, March 23, 1790,[2] to the editor of the *Federal Gazette*. This speech, given in full below, was supposedly made by a member of the Divan of Algiers in 1687 in answer to a

[1] Quoted from James Woodburn's article, op. cit., p. 252.
[2] Franklin died twenty-four days later, April 17, 1790.

petition of a sect called *Erika* which prayed for the abolition of slavery and piracy.

To the Editor of the Federal Gazette.

March 23d, 1790.

Sir,

Reading last night in your excellent paper the speech of Mr. Jackson in Congress against their meddling with the Affair of Slavery, or attempting to mend the Condition of the Slaves, it put me in mind of a similar One made about 100 Years since by Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim, a member of the Divan of Algiers, which may be seen in Martin's Account of his Consulship, anno 1687. It was against granting the Petition of the Sect called *Erika*, or Purists, who pray'd for the Abolition of Piracy and Slavery as being unjust. Mr. Jackson does not quote it; perhaps he has not seen it. If, therefore, some of its Reasonings are to be found in his eloquent Speech, it may only show that men's Interests and Intellects operate and are operated on with surprising similarity in all Countries and Climates, when under similar Circumstances. The African's Speech, as translated, is as follows.

"*Allah Bismillah, &c. God is great, and Mahomet is his Prophet.*

"Have these *Erika* considered the Consequences of granting their Petition? If we cease our Cruises against the Christians, how shall we be furnished with the Commodities their Countries produce, and which are so necessary for us? If we forbear to make Slaves of their People, who in this hot Climate are to cultivate our Lands? Who are to perform the common Labours of our City, and in our Families? Must we not then be our own Slaves? And is there not more Compassion and more Favour due to us as Mussulmen, than to these Christian Dogs? We have now about 50,000 Slaves in and near Algiers. This num-

ber, if not kept up by fresh Supplies, will soon diminish, and be gradually annihilated. If we then cease taking and plundering the Infidel Ships, and making Slaves of the Seamen and Passengers, our Lands will become of no Value for want of Cultivation; the Rents of Houses in the City will sink one half; and the Revenues of Government arising from its Share of Prizes be totally destroy'd! And for what? To gratify the whims of a whimsical Sect, who would have us, not only forbear making more Slaves, but even to manumit those we have.

"But who is to indemnify their Masters for the Loss? Will the State do it? Is our Treasury sufficient? Will the *Erika* do it? Can they do it? Or would they, to do what they think Justice to the Slaves, do a greater Injustice to the Owners? And if we set our Slaves free, what is to be done with them? Few of them will return to their Countries; they know too well the greater Hardships they must there be subject to; they will not embrace our holy Religion; they will not adopt our Manners; our People will not pollute themselves by intermarrying with them. Must we maintain them as Beggars in our Streets, or suffer our Properties to be the Prey of their Pillage? For Men long accustom'd to Slavery will not work for a Livelihood when not compell'd. And what is there so pitiable in their present Condition? Were they not Slaves in their own Countries?

"Are not Spain, Portugal, France and the Italian States govern'd by Despots, who hold all their Subjects in Slavery, without Exception? Even England treats its Sailors as Slaves; for they are, whenever the Government pleases, seiz'd, and confin'd in Ships of War, condemn'd not only to work, but to fight, for small Wages, or a mere Subsistence, not better than our Slaves are allow'd by us. Is their Condition then made worse by their falling into our Hands? No; they have only exchanged one Slavery for another, and I may say a better; for here they are brought

into a Land where the Sun of Islamism gives forth its Light, and shines in full Splendor, and they have an Opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the true Doctrine, and thereby saving their immortal Souls. Those who remain at home have not that Happiness. Sending the Slaves home then would be sending them out of Light into Darkness.

"I repeat the Question, What is to be done with them? I have heard it suggested, that they may be planted in the Wilderness, where there is plenty of Land for them to subsist on, and where they may flourish as a free State; but they are, I doubt, too little dispos'd to labour without Compulsion, as well as too ignorant to establish a good government, and the wild Arabs would soon molest and destroy or again enslave them. While serving us, we take care to provide them with every thing, and they are treated with Humanity. The Labourers in their own Country are, as I am well informed, worse fed, lodged, and cloathed. The Condition of most of them is therefore already mended, and requires no further Improvement. Here their Lives are in Safety. They are not liable to be impress'd for Soldiers, and forc'd to cut one another's Christian Throats, as in the Wars of their own Countries. If some of the religious mad Bigots, who now tease us with their silly Petitions, have in a fit of blind Zeal freed their Slaves, it was not Generosity, it was not Humanity, that mov'd them to the Action; it was from the conscious Burthen of a Load of Sins, and Hope, from the supposed Merits of so good a Work, to be excus'd Damnation.

"How grossly are they mistaken in imagining Slavery to be disallow'd by the Alcoran! Are not the two Precepts, to quote no more, '*Masters, treat your Slaves with kindness; Slaves, serve your Masters with Cheerfulness and Fidelity,*' clear proofs to the contrary? Nor can the Plundering of Infidels be in that sacred Book forbidden, since it is well known from it, that God has given the

World, and all that it contains, to his faithful Mussulmen, who are to enjoy it of Right as fast as they conquer it. Let us then hear no more of this detestable Proposition, the Manumission of Christian Slaves, the Adoption of which would, by depreciating our Lands and Houses, and thereby depriving so many good Citizens of their Properties, create universal Discontent, and provoke Insurrections, to the endangering of Government and producing general Confusion. I have therefore no doubt, but this wise Council will prefer the Comfort and Happiness of a whole Nation of true Believers to the Whim of a few *Erika,* and dismiss their Petition."

The Result was as Martin tells us, that the Divan came to this Resolution; "The Doctrine, that Plundering and Enslaving the Christians is unjust, is at best *problematical;* but that it is the Interest of this State to continue the Practice, is clear; therefore let the Petition be rejected."

And it was rejected accordingly.

And since like Motives are apt to produce in the Minds of Men like Opinions and Resolutions, may we not, Mr. Brown, venture to predict, from this Account, that the Petitions to the Parliament of England for abolishing the Slave-Trade, to say nothing of other Legislatures, and the Debates upon them, will have a similar Conclusion? I am, Sir, your constant Reader and humble Servant.

HISTORICUS.[1]

Franklin's writings contain all the fundamental ethical and economic arguments against the institution of slavery. The first evidence which would indicate his opposition to slavery was his printing of the pamphlets of the early abolitionists. The period of his more active interest in abolition began in 1760 when he became a member of "Dr. Bray's Associates."

[1] Franklin (Smyth), X, 87-91.

Thereafter the events which immediately preceded the American Revolution and the performance of diplomatic duties in France naturally chiefly engaged his attention. From 1787-1790 as President of the Pennsylvania Society for promoting the Abolition of Slavery he was especially active in the abolitionist movement. At this time of his life he was a world-renowned celebrity. His writings against slavery and the association of his name in the fight against it exerted a powerful influence, not only in the United States but also in Europe, in bringing slavery into a greater degree of disrepute.

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Chapter V

INSURANCE

FRANKLIN first obtained information about mutual insurance companies and mutual benefit or friendly societies when as a boy he read Daniel Defoe's *Essay upon Projects*.[1] In one of his *Silence Dogood*[2] papers which he contributed to his brother James' *New-England Courant* (August 6-August 13, 1722) he quotes verbatim over nine pages of Defoe's *Essay upon Projects* which outline a plan for the establishment of a friendly society for the benefit of widows.[3] His attention was also called to the utility of mutual benefit societies by Dr. Cotton Mather's *Bonifacius*[4] which he read during his boyhood at Boston. Before he made his first visit to England (1724-1726), and while he was employed in the printing establishment

[1] Franklin (Smyth), I, 238.

[2] Franklin employed the nom de plume, Silence Dogood, supposedly the name of a spinster who contributed these articles to *The New-England Courant*.

[3] Compare Franklin (Smyth), II, 32-37, with Defoe's *Essay upon Projects* (London, 1697), pp. 132-141. Defoe's essay was published anonymously. In 1722 Franklin probably did not know the name of its author. He does not, however, mention the title of the book from which he quotes.

[4] *Bonifacius. An Essay Upon the Good, that is to be Devised and Designed, By Those who Desire to Answer the Great End of Life, and to Do Good While they Live* (Boston, 1710). Dr. Mather in this work (pp. 82-84 and 86-88) emphasized the utility of societies. It is interesting to observe that this work and particularly Defoe's *Essay upon Projects* directed Franklin's attention (Franklin (Smyth), I, 238) to the value of organizations for civic betterment, and that he later established and played a prominent rôle in founding many such organizations and societies in the city of Philadelphia.

of Samuel Keimer at Philadelphia, he printed Francis Rawle's *Ways and Means for the Inhabitants of Delaware to become Rich*, the first American book to mention the subject of insurance.[1]

Franklin's interest in mutual fire insurance caused him to play a prominent part in the organization of the Philadelphia Contributionship. Early in 1752 several prominent Philadelphians placed a notice in his *Pennsylvania Gazette* stating that all who desired "to subscribe to the articles of insurance of houses from fire" might do so by taking out subscriptions at the city courthouse every Sunday afternoon until April 13, 1752, when twelve directors and a treasurer were to be elected. On April 13, as was announced, twelve directors, one of whom was Franklin, were elected. John Smith who was chosen treasurer was apparently the most active person in promoting the interests of the concern. Lieutenant-Governor James Hamilton was the first subscriber and Franklin headed the list of directors and was the first citizen subscriber.[2]

The Contributionship was modelled after "The Amicable Contributionship, and Hand-in-Hand Fire Office of London" which began its existence in 1696. The well-known hand-in-hand seal of the Philadelphia

[1] The first edition bears the date 1725. It was published by Keimer when Franklin was in England, 1724-1726. In this pamphlet (pp. 62-63) Rawle suggested that the Loan-Office of Pennsylvania might insure ships and cargoes. He stated that insurers' losses might be paid from the money that was obtained as interest on the province's paper currency.

[2] Scharf and Westcott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884*, III, 2114; Address of Horace Binney, *Centennial Meeting of the Philadelphia Contributionship*, p. 21.

company was the same as the one used by the London concern.

The business principles of this early fire insurance company are of interest today. As stated by Horace Binney in an address[1] delivered at its centennial meeting (April, 1852), the company in 1752 issued policies for seven years, the policy holder paying his whole premium in advance, the interest on the premium going to the company. All risks from fire, whether caused by rebellion, riots or the public enemy, were borne by the company; the property was protected by the policy for any number of losses from fire that might occur during the life of the policy without reducing the amount of insurance or impairing the deposit. But if a building was destroyed from the first floor up the company had the option of paying the whole amount of the insurance and thus terminating the policy or it might rebuild, in which case the policy remained in force. Payment of premium and signature to the so-called "deed of settlement," the articles of association and agreement, made the insured a member of the company. Personal liability of the insured was one and a half times the amount deposited as a premium in case a series of fires depleted the company's funds. The company was managed on a profit and loss basis, funds with accrued interest or losses being equally distributed among members at the expiration of policies, every seven years. Executors, administrators and assignees were included as members upon notice within a limited time and with the

[1] Address of Horace Binney, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

approval of the directors. Attendance of members at monthly meetings was compulsory; failure to attend was punishable by fines which went to a fund to buy milestones for roads entering Philadelphia.[1]

What part Franklin played in determining the business policies of this concern is impossible to ascertain. He was apparently not very actively interested in the affairs of the Contributionship being too busy with his other duties. He used his personal influence to bring about the founding of the company and then probably withdrew and let the other members manage the business. He was a director for only two years, 1752-1753 and 1753-1754. During 1753 he attended the monthly meetings very infrequently, and unless he was excused from attending must have had to pay quite a sum in fines.[2]

In 1788 the crops over a large portion of France were destroyed by a severe storm. On hearing of this calamity Franklin wrote to M. Le Veillard, October 24, 1788, "It must have been a terrible tempest that devastated such an extent of country. I have sometimes thought that it might be well to establish an office of insurance for farms against the damage that may occur to them from storms, blight, insects, etc. A small sum paid by a number would repair such losses and prevent much poverty and distress." [3]

[1] A policy issued to one John Potts, July 7, 1764, may be found in the appendix. The original policy is in the Mason Library, No. 3565.

[2] Directors of the company were fined two shillings for failure to attend monthly meetings.

[3] Letter to M. Le Veillard, Philadelphia, October 24, 1788. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 674. The crop failure of 1788 in France, followed by the severe winter of 1789 caused terrible suffering among the people. These were circumstances which played an important part in bringing about the French Revolution.

These remarks are interesting for they contain one of the first suggestions for the insurance of crops.

He believed in life annuities because they provided means for the care of the aged and because, to procure the sums of money necessary to obtain them, habits of industry and frugality were developed. He undoubtedly obtained much of his information on the subject of annuities from his intimate friend, Dr. Richard Price, with whose writings on the subject he was familiar. In 1769 Price addressed a letter to him on the expectation of lives, the increase of mankind, and the population of London which was published in the *Philosophical Transactions* (1769) of the Royal Society.[1] He was probably also familiar with a paper on the proper method of calculating the values of contingent reversions which Price submitted to that society in 1770. He had the second edition of Price's book, *Observations on Reversionary Payments; the Value of Assurance on Lives and the National Debt*, which appeared in 1772.[2] In 1772 Francis Maseres, the English mathematician, historian and reformer, sent him his pamphlet, *Proposal for establishing Life Annuities in Parishes* (1772), which Franklin read and thought excellent.[3] His interest in annuities is also shown by the fact that he wrote a three page dissertation [4] on the subject and was always anxious to obtain statistics showing the mortality rates and the

[1] *Dictionary of National Biography*, XLVI, 334-335.
[2] Letter to Francis Maseres, Craven Street, June 17, 1772. Franklin (Smyth), V, 406.
[3] Franklin (Smyth), V, 406.
[4] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, IV, 386.

increases of population in various parts of the world. An undated memorandum, *Dr. Halley's Life insurance Observations,* among his papers, shows that he was interested in acquiring information about vital statistics and annuities.[1]

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[1] Ibid., IV, 374. Dr. Edmund Halley's "Breslau Table of Mortality" is said to have marked the beginning of the science of life statistics. *Dictionary of National Biography,* XXIV, 108.

Chapter VI

FRANKLIN'S INFLUENCE ON ADAM SMITH

A LETTER which Deborah Logan of Pennsylvania wrote to a friend in 1829 contains the following passage: "Dr. Franklin once told my husband that the celebrated Adam Smith, when writing his 'Wealth of Nations,' was in the habit of bringing chapter after chapter, as he composed it, to himself, Dr. Price and others of the literati of that day, with whom he was intimate; patiently hearing their observations, and profiting by their discussions and criticisms. Nay, that he has sometimes reversed his positions and rewritten whole chapters, after hearing what they had to remark on the subject before them."[1]

The next year (1830) John Fanning Watson who knew Mrs. Logan and her husband, Dr. Logan, published the first edition of his *Annals of Philadelphia.* On page 514 of this work appears an almost verbatim reproduction of the passage of Mrs. Logan's letter quoted above. Watson in writing about Dr. Franklin's influence on Adam Smith states that "He (Franklin) once told Dr. Logan that the celebrated Adam Smith, when writing his 'Wealth of Nations,'

[1] *The Historical Magazine* (Second Series, Vol. IV, 1868, p. 280), printed this extract of Mrs. Logan's letter which was contributed by the Hon. William Willis, LL.D., of Portland, Me. The writer has been unable to find Mrs. Logan's original letter and does not know to whom it was addressed. Dr. James A. Spaulding, librarian at the Portland Public Library, informs the writer that he has been unable to locate any of Dr. Willis' literary remains.

was in the habit of bringing chapter after chapter as he composed it, to himself, Dr. Price and others of the literati; then patiently hear their observations, and profit by their discussions and criticism—even sometimes submitting to write whole chapters anew, and even to reverse some of his propositions."

This passage of Watson's *Annals* is the ultimate source of similar statements in all books published prior to 1899. James Parton in his *Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin* (1864) obtained his information from Watson's *Annals* and nearly every writer who has discussed Franklin's influence on Smith has drawn on Parton or probably became acquainted with the *Annals* after having read the latter's biography of Franklin.

Shortly after Dr. Logan's death (April 8, 1821) Deborah Logan [1] began to write her *Memoir of Dr. George Logan of Stenton* which was published by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1899. In this work she wrote the following account of Franklin's influence on Adam Smith in relating how her husband prepared himself for his public duties in the Assembly of Pennsylvania to which he was elected in 1785: "In reading 'The Wealth of Nations,' which he justly appreciated without approving of all which the author has advanced, he told me of what Dr. Franklin had related to him of Adam Smith, with whom he was well acquainted. When writing that celebrated work, he was in the habit of taking the chapters as he composed them to his literary friends, and submitting the work to their inspection and criticism.

[1] Deborah Logan was born in 1761 and died in 1839.

He often availed himself of the benefit of their remarks, so as to rewrite chapters and reverse propositions. Dr. Franklin said he frequently brought it to himself and Dr. Price." [1] This statement is substantially the same as the one in her letter of 1829 quoted above.

Since Mrs. Logan is the primary contemporary authority for the statement that Franklin assisted Smith in the composition of the *Wealth of Nations* and exerted an influence on the economic views expressed in this work, it is necessary to determine what credence should be given to her statement before accepting it as fact. The principal questions to be answered in this connection are the following: did Deborah Logan draw on her imagination or had she an actual foundation for the statements in question; did Dr. Franklin make the statement to Dr. Logan, and if so, what allowance for error must be made in view of the fact that Deborah Logan gave the statement second hand? Other considerations, such as when these alleged statements were made and repeated, the intimacy of the relations of the persons involved, their natural tendencies to tell the truth or to exaggerate, their biases and ages must also be taken into account.

Dr. Charles Stillé [2] in his introduction to Mrs.

[1] Deborah Logan, *Memoir of Dr. George Logan of Stenton*, pp. 46-47.

[2] Charles Janeway Stillé (1819-1899) at the time he wrote this introduction was eighty years of age. He was a prominent historian and an eminent authority on Pennsylvania history. After serving as professor of Belles Lettres and History he became Provost of the University of Pennsylvania (1868-80). From 1893-1899 he was President of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. He wrote extensively on historical subjects and is the author of an excellent life of John Dickinson. A sketch of Dr. Stillé's life is given in an address of Robert E. Thompson, *Penn. Mag. Hist. and Biog.* Vol. XXIV (1900), pp. V-XXVIII.

Logan's *Memoir* evaluates the work as an historical document in these words: "The intimate personal knowledge possessed by Mrs. Logan of the events of the first half-century of the life of the nation, the fidelity and literary skill with which she describes the impression made upon her by constant intercourse with the eminent men who then guided the national policy, the knowledge which she possessed of the secret motives which roused the fierce and unreasoning passions of party spirit in those days, as well as the valuable contributions which in former days she has made to Pennsylvania provincial history, all combine to make her memoir of Dr. Logan a singularly important record of the history of the formative condition of the country. Mrs. Logan, of course, was in full sympathy with the opinions and acts of her husband, who was largely engaged in public affairs during these trying times, having been one of the leaders of the anti-Federal party and a Senator from Pennsylvania. The reader must expect and allow for such a bias. Still, the immense value of the personal recollections of a gifted woman who writes of contemporaneous events cannot be set aside nor overlooked as having a special historical value." [1]

Deborah Logan (1761-1839) was sixty-eight years of age when she wrote the previously mentioned letter in 1829; she was at least sixty when she began to write her *Memoir*. This work contains no glaringly inaccurate statements of fact and Dr. Stillé was justified in concluding that it is a valuable historical document.

[1] Deborah Logan, *Memoir of Dr. George Logan of Stenton*, Introduction, pp. 9-10.

In spite of her age the author was obviously in full possession of her mental faculties.

In 1781, at the age of twenty, she married Dr. Logan, and lived with him on terms of great intimacy for forty years. She was well acquainted with the facts of his life and in full sympathy with his political views. On several occasions she met and conversed with Dr. Franklin whose wisdom she greatly admired, but having the strict morality of the Quaker sect to which she and her husband belonged, she laments in her *Memoir* that "there should have been any 'errata' in his moral Conduct" and "that he should have stooped to dishonour his pen by the false statements and glosses of 'The Critical Review of the Government of Pennsylvania'!" [1] Being a Quaker she took exception to the charges which this book made against the Penns, the Quaker proprietaries of Pennsylvania.

While Mrs. Logan was unquestionably desirous of presenting the life of her husband in the best possible light she could have had no motive in extolling Franklin's greatness unless perhaps she was actuated to do so from a feeling of pride in the fact that she and her husband were acquainted with the most versatile and in many respects the greatest American of his day. Her statement that Smith received assistance from Drs. Franklin and Price while he was preparing the manuscript of the *Wealth of Nations* for the press

[1] Deborah Logan, op. cit., p. 39 refers to *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania* (London, 1759). Franklin did not write this book. It was written either by Richard Jackson or James Ralph and probably by the former. See Franklin's letter to Norris, June 9, 1759, Mason No. 223; also his letter to Hume, September 27, 1760. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 82.

was probably her recollection of a curious and unusual incident which her husband had related to her.

The determination of the approximate date of Franklin's alleged conversation with Dr. Logan is of great importance in establishing the credibility of the statement in Deborah Logan's *Memoir*. If the approximate date of this alleged conversation were known it would be possible to determine the time which elapsed before Deborah Logan wrote the statement in her *Memoir;* for it is known that she began her *Memoir* shortly after Dr. Logan's death in 1821. If the *Memoir* of Dr. Logan's life were written in chronological sequence or in the order of its present pagination, the statement in question which appears on pages 46 and 47 was probably written not very long after 1821. In order to determine the probable date of the alleged statement of Dr. Franklin to Dr. Logan it is necessary to know the occasions when they met. Furthermore it must be ascertained on which of these occasions Franklin probably made the statement in question.

George Logan went to England towards the end of the year 1774 or at the beginning of 1775 to prepare himself for the practice of medicine. He was recommended by his father, William Logan, to two of Franklin's intimate English Quaker friends, David Barclay and Dr. Fothergill. On the latter's advice Logan pursued the study of pharmacy under Dr. John Sims, a Quaker physician at Dunmow in Essex. There is no evidence to prove that Logan met Franklin in London during 1774-1775. It is not at all im-

probable, however, that he did, for Franklin was a friend of the Logan family in Pennsylvania and young Logan might have paid him a visit. During 1773-1776 Adam Smith was at London working on the manuscript of the *Wealth of Nations*, and it was at this time, according to Deborah Logan, that Drs. Franklin and Price assisted him with his book. That Franklin made a statement to this effect to Logan during 1774-1775 is very improbable, for the *Wealth of Nations* was not published until March 9, 1776, almost a year after Franklin left England (March 21, 1775). It is not likely that Franklin would have stated that he had collaborated with the author of a manuscript which at the time of his departure from England was not yet ready for the press. He had no means of knowing at that time when the manuscript would be published; no definite knowledge, in fact, that it would ever appear in print.

From 1776-1779 Logan studied at the University of Edinburgh where he received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. After his graduation he traveled in Ireland, England, Holland, Germany and Italy, and spent considerable time on terms of great intimacy with Franklin at Passy, France, 1779-1780.[1] Franklin is known to have had a two volume edition[2] of the *Wealth of Nations* in his library at Passy and if he discussed this work with Dr. Logan there he may have

[1] Deborah Logan, op. cit., pp. 36-39.

[2] The only English editions of the *Wealth of Nations* which were published in two volumes in Franklin's lifetime were the editions of 1776 and 1778. When Franklin came into possession of the *Wealth of Nations* is not known. It is not definitely known whether he possessed this work in 1779 or 1780.

made the statement in 1779 or 1780 which Mrs. Logan relates in her *Memoir* and in her letter of 1829.

In the fall of 1780 Dr. Logan returned to America. Five years later Franklin also returned, and Dr. Logan is known to have continued his acquaintance with Franklin until the latter's death in 1790. In 1785 Dr. Logan was elected to the Legislature of Pennsylvania and served in this body for four years. Mrs. Logan in her *Memoir* writes about her husband's preparation for his public duties as follows: "When Dr. Logan was selected by his fellow-citizens to represent them in the Legislature of the State he was exceedingly desirous to discharge his duty to them in the most honest and conscientious manner, and with this intention he devoted all his leisure to the reading of such authors as he thought had thrown most light on political science."[1] She then proceeds to name the works which she recalled her husband had read. In the next paragraph she mentions that he read the *Wealth of Nations* and gives the statement which she alleges Franklin made to her husband relative to Dr. Price and himself having assisted Smith with this work. The approximate date when Dr. Logan began reading the *Wealth of Nations* was therefore 1785 when he was elected to the Legislature of Pennsylvania. It is reasonable to assume that he told his wife at this time what Franklin had related to him about the assistance that Smith received in the preparation of his book for the press. There is no way, however, of dating Franklin's alleged conversation with Dr.

[1] Deborah Logan, op. cit., p. 46.

Logan. This conversation may have occurred in 1779 or 1780 or possibly about 1785, at which time both Dr. Logan and Franklin were residing in Pennsylvania.

Dr. and Mrs. Logan as well as Franklin were in full possession of their mental powers in 1785. Dr. Logan was then thirty-two years of age;[1] his wife was twenty-four and Franklin seventy-nine. The latter's memory in old age was unusually accurate, a fact which is proved by the latter portions of his *Autobiography,* written when he was over eighty, and in which he accurately recalled facts and dates even without the aid of his papers. All three persons bore unimpeachable reputations for honesty and truthfulness and must be regarded as capable, trustworthy, historical witnesses.

The most tenacious memories, however, are prone to forget, and repetitions of a statement inevitably produce variations from the original, especially after lapses of time. If Franklin told Dr. Logan in 1779 or 1780 that he assisted Smith with the *Wealth of Nations* he recollected events which transpired at London from four to six or from five to seven years previously;[2] if he made the statement in 1785 he called to mind events which occurred at London ten or twelve years before. If Dr. Logan repeated Franklin's statement to his wife in 1785 at least thirty-six years elapsed before she gave her version of it in her

[1] Dr. George Logan was born in 1753 and died in 1821.

[2] Smith was working on his book at London, 1773-1776. He and Franklin were in London, 1773-1775. Franklin left England for America March 21, 1775.

Memoir, and forty-four years passed before she wrote the letter of 1829.

The question naturally arises whether Mrs. Logan's statement should be regarded as unworthy of credence.

In the first place, it may be definitely asserted that Mrs. Logan did not produce these passages of her *Memoir* and of her letter solely from imagination. They contain no anachronisms. Franklin, Smith and Price *were* in London, 1773-1775, when Smith was working on his book. Mrs. Logan probably could not have learned, except from her husband, that Smith was revising and adding to his manuscript at this time.[1] One may safely assert that she never saw a written statement to the effect that Franklin and Price assisted Smith or that these men were acquainted with each other; for no such statement was ever published in her lifetime so far as is now known. The statements in her *Memoir* and in her letter of 1829, as will be presently shown, have so many elements of truth in them that they cannot be regarded as figments of her imagination.

Franklin and Smith *were acquainted* with each other. They met for the first time at the home of Dr. Robertson at Edinburgh in 1759.[2] During their

[1] It is a remarkable fact that Mrs. Logan was better informed about Smith's literary labors at London than Professor James E. Thorold Rogers who edited the *Wealth of Nations* in 1869, and who stated in 1885 that this work lay "unrevised and unaltered" in the author's desk from 1772 until 1776. This erroneous opinion was based on a letter of Smith to William Pulteney which Rogers published in the *Academy*, February 28, 1885. See John Rae's comments on Roger's statement in his *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 256.

[2] Alexander Carlyle, *Autobiography of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle*, pp. 394-395.

six weeks' sojourn in Scotland in this year Franklin and his son, William, visited Glasgow,[1] and probably also the University of Glasgow where Smith was Professor of Moral Philosophy. After the return of the Franklins to London Smith wrote as follows to William Strahan,[2] April 4, 1760: "Remember me to the Franklins. I hope I shall have the grace to write to the youngest by next post to thank him, in the name both of the College and of myself, for his very agreeable present." [3]

That Smith and Franklin were acquainted at London during 1773-1775 is also indicated by a letter which David Hume wrote to Smith, Edinburgh, February 13, 1774: "Pray what strange accounts are these we hear of Franklyn's conduct? I am very slow in believing that he has been guilty in the extreme degree that is pretended, tho' I always knew him to be a very factious man, and Faction next to Fanaticism is of all passions the most destructive of morality. I hear that Wedderburn's treatment of him before the Council was most cruel without being in the least blamable. What a pity!" [4] The incident referred to in this letter was Franklin's examination before the

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 88. While Franklin and his son were at Edinburgh they stayed with a Mrs. Cowan in Miln Square. See an unpublished letter of Franklin to William Strahan (?), Edinburgh, September 6, 1759, at the Mason Library.

[2] Strahan, an intimate friend of Franklin published Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London, 1759). He was a member of the firm of W. Strahan and T. Cadell which published the first edition of the *Wealth of Nations* (1776).

[3] John Rae, *Life of Adam Smith*, p. 150. Franklin again visited Edinburgh October 26-November 20, 1771, and stayed at the residence of David Hume, but he did not meet Smith during his sojourn in Scotland. The latter was then busy at work on his book at Kirkcaldy.

[4] Ibid., p. 267.

Privy Council, January 29, 1774, by Solicitor-General Wedderburn, a former student under Smith and a friend of Hume.[1] Wedderburn in his examination of Franklin accused the latter of causing the theft of certain letters which Governor Thomas Hutchinson and Lieutenant-Governor Oliver of Massachusetts had written to their friends in England. These letters proved that Hutchinson and Oliver played traitors to the Massachusetts' Assembly and to the people of that colony. During his examination Franklin refused to divulge the names of the persons from whom he obtained this correspondence. Wedderburn's abuse of Franklin had come to the ears of Hume at Edinburgh, and in his letter to Smith he indicates that the latter, who knew both Wedderburn and Franklin, might supply him with more detailed information regarding Franklin's examination. Hume, who was Smith's most intimate friend, was aware of the fact that the latter knew both Wedderburn and Franklin. Hume's letter therefore tends to show his belief that Franklin and Smith were acquainted at London in 1774.

Mrs. Logan's *Memoir* and the statement in her letter of 1829 assert that Smith and Franklin were "well acquainted" and "intimate." These assertions of the existence of an intimate acquaintanceship may be exaggerations; yet the existence of their acquaintance is an indisputable fact which in a measure substantiates Mrs. Logan's statements.

[1] See letter of Hume to Dr. Clephane, March 6, 1753. J. H. Burton, *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, I, 379; also Rae, op. cit., p. 32.

The credibility of Mrs. Logan's statements may be further tested by ascertaining whether Smith, Franklin and Price were easily accessible to each other at London as her statements imply. The three men were members of the Royal Society of London which had quarters in Fleet Street where they might have conveniently met.[1] Franklin and Price are known to have attended meetings of the Society during 1773-1775, but it is not known whether Smith was ever present, since neither he nor any of his contemporaries mention his attendance and because no record[2] of attendance of members was kept. Dr. Price was in the habit of spending some of his evenings each week in the company of his friends who met in a coffee-house in St. Paul's Church-yard and afterwards at the London Coffee-house, Ludgate-hill, London.[3] Franklin attended these meetings and it is possible that Smith was also present. He certainly would have been interested in the discussions relative to the disputes between England and her colonies; for the colonial question is treated at great length in the *Wealth of Nations.* Smith could easily have met Price and Franklin at the latter's residence, No. 7 Craven Street, London, which was only a short distance from the British Coffee-house in Cockspur

[1] Smith was elected Fellow of the Royal Society May 21, 1767, but was not admitted until May 27, 1773. Franklin became a member in 1756, and Price, December 5, 1765.

[2] The writer is indebted to Sir Arthur Schuster, Foreign Secretary of the London Royal Society, for this information.

[3] William Morgan, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Richard Price, D.D., F.R.S.*, pp. 48-49.

Street which was Smith's headquarters during his stay in London, 1773-1776.[1]

Mrs. Logan's statements imply that Smith composed the *Wealth of Nations* at London.[2] Edwin Cannan, the greatest authority on this work, however, states: "Its composition was spread over at least the twenty-seven years from 1749 to 1776." [3] This statement, nevertheless, cannot vitiate Mrs. Logan's implication that the book was written at the time Smith, Franklin and Price were together at London; for Franklin would not have known that Smith had a manuscript which he had been composing twenty-four years prior to Franklin's arrival in the city. Smith's continual labor on his manuscript; his revisions of it and additions to it; the presentation of his manuscript by chapters for criticisms and suggestions and his excessive secrecy, due to his great fear of plagiarism,[4] would have caused Franklin to believe that the book was written at London and he would have stated this as a fact to Dr. Logan.

John Rae, Smith's best biographer, in commenting on the changes and additions Smith made in his manuscript, 1773-1775, writes, "He made many changes or additions in 1773; for example, the remarks on the price of hides,[5] in the chapter on Rent, were written

[1] See Karl Baedeker, *London and its Environs*, Appendix, Plan IV; also Rae, op. cit., p. 267.

[2] She does not mention London, but it is obvious that she had London in mind as the place where Smith met Franklin and Price.

[3] Edwin Cannan in his Introduction to the *Wealth of Nations*, I, XLVII.

[4] Rae, op. cit., pp. 64, 269.

[5] The *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 231.

in February, 1773; and those on the decline of sugar-refining in colonies taken from the French, in the chapter on the Colonies,[1] were written in October; while the passage on American wages, in the chapter on Wages, was inserted some time in the same year. The extensive additions in the chapters on the Revenue, occasioned by reading the *Mémoires concernant les Droits,* must have been written after 1774, because Smith probably obtained that book after Turgot became Minister in the middle of that year; his remarks, in the chapter on Colonies, on the effects of recent events on the trade with North America, and his remarks on the Irish revenue in the chapter on Public Debts, were added in 1775 . . ." [2] Further on Rae says, ". . . there exists abundance of evidence that Smith was busy for most of three years after this date (1773) [3] and mainly in London altering, improving, and adding to the manuscript of the book. New lines of investigation would suggest themselves, new theories to be thought out, and the task would grow day by day by a very simple but unforeseen process of natural accretion." [4]

These passages of Rae further substantiate Mrs. Logan's statement that Smith was composing and rewriting the *Wealth of Nations* at London.

Before attempting to ascertain the extent of Franklin's influence on Smith while the latter was working on his book at London (1773-1775) it is

[1] The *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), II, 83.
[2] Rae, op. cit., pp. 256-257.
[3] The date and parentheses are mine. L.J.C.
[4] Rae, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

necessary to determine the extent of the influence which Franklin may have exerted on his economic views prior to 1773. As has been stated, Franklin met Smith at Edinburgh and probably also at Glasgow in 1759. It is improbable, however, that he exerted any influence on Smith's economic thought during his six weeks' visit in Scotland. The two men probably merely became acquainted with each other at this time. During 1760, after he returned to London, Franklin sent Smith's friend and patron, Lord Kames, his *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries.*[1] Later in the same year he sent David Hume, Smith's most intimate friend, *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania* and a pamphlet containing two of his essays, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered* and *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries.*[2] Earlier in the same year (1760) he sent the same pamphlet containing these two essays to Lord Kames,[3] and in April, 1767, he inclosed in a letter to Kames his *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money.*[4] In 1769 he probably sent Kames his *Positions to be Examined, Concerning National Wealth* and promised soon to send him his *Experiments and Observations on Electricity.*[5] On February 21, 1769, Franklin wrote to Kames, "I have sent by sea, to the care of Mr. Alexander, a little box containing a few

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 3.
[2] Ibid., IV, 82-83.
[3] Ibid., IV, 11, 12 and note.
[4] Ibid., V, 187 and note, 188-189.
[5] Ibid., V, 190 and notes 1 and 2.

copies of the late edition of my books,[1] for my friends in Scotland. One is directed for you, and one for your Society,[2] which I beg that you and they would accept as a small mark of my respect." [3]

Smith undoubtedly obtained copies of Franklin's writings from Lord Kames or David Hume who were his most intimate friends. He had in his library Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity, made at Philadelphia in America* [4] (London, 1769), and it is definitely known that he read it before he went to London in 1773; for in his *Essay on the External Senses*, p. 215, which was written before that date, he wrote to Franklin's objections to the theory that sound was wholly produced by vibrations of air, "Dr. Franklin has made objections to this doctrine, but, I think, without success." [5] Franklin's book *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*, pp. 197-206, contains his important essay on population, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.* If Smith read the portion of the book which relates to electricity he most certainly also read in it this essay of Franklin on population. Smith also had in his library *An His-*

[1] *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* (London, 1769).

[2] The Edinburgh Philosophical Society of which Kames had been elected President. Adam Smith was elected a member of this society in 1752. Kames and Smith also belonged to the Select Society of Edinburgh in which Smith was an active member, 1754-1764. Rae, op. cit., pp. 107-118; also A. F. Tytler, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Henry Home of Kames*, I, 245 and note; II, 116 and note.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), V, 196.

[4] *A Catalogue of the Library of Adam Smith*, edited by James Bonar, p. 41.

[5] Smith had reference to Franklin's letter to a Friend, July 20, 1762. See *Experiments and Observations on Electricity*, 435-437. Franklin suggests in this letter that electricity might be an agency in the propagation of sound.

torical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania[1] and Franklin's pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered with regard to her Colonies and the Acquisition of Canada and Guadaloupe to which are added Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries, &c.*"[2] (London, 1760). Smith undoubtedly came into possession of these writings before 1773 and probably read all of them before that date.

By comparing the portions of the *Wealth of Nations*, which so far as is known, were written prior to 1773, with Franklin's writings which Smith possessed and which he undoubtedly read before 1773, it is possible to determine in some degree the extent of Franklin's influence on his economic thought before he went to London (1773). In the *Wealth of Nations* Smith twice repeats statements, similar to those made by Franklin in his essays, that in the British colonies of North America the population doubled in twenty or twenty-five years.[3] Smith undoubtedly obtained information relative to the economic effects of cheap

[1] The book was published at London in 1759 and the following year Franklin sent Hume a copy.

[2] Bonar, p. 89. Smith therefore had two copies of Franklin's *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind.*

[3] Compare the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 72, 390, with passages in Franklin's essays, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* and *The Interest of Great Britain Considered.* Franklin (Smyth), III, 65. Smith may have obtained the same information from Dr. John Mitchell's *The Present State of Great Britain and North America with regard to Agriculture, Population, Trade and Manufactures* (1767), p. 22. See also Cannan's note in the *Wealth of Nations*, I, 72; also Bonar, op. cit., p. 3. When Smith came into possession of Mitchell's work is not known. Smith did not have in his library the first edition of Richard Price's *Observations of Reversionary Payments*, which appeared in 1771. He had the 4th edition of this work in two volumes, published at London in 1783. Franklin supplied Price with the information regarding the rate at which population in America increased.

and plentiful lands, on wages and on the increase of population in North America and in new colonies from Franklin's *Observations on the Increase of Mankind* and *The Interest of Great Britain Considered*.[1] Smith also accepted the principle, set forth by Franklin in the former essay, that population tends to be limited by the means of subsistence.[2] From this essay he probably also derived knowledge relative to the economic advantage of free labor over that of slaves.[3] Some of Smith's information regarding certain phases of the economic life of Pennsylvania was probably obtained from *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania*. His information relative to the stability and the method of issuing paper money in Pennsylvania seems to have been obtained from Franklin—either from the latter's paper, *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money* (1767) which he may have read, or from David Hume whose information on this subject was gleaned from that source or obtained from Franklin personally.[4] Internal evidence in the *Wealth of Nations* does not indicate that Smith received in-

[1] Compare the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 72-73, 390-391; II, 67-68, with Franklin (Smyth), III, 65; IV, 54 and note.

[2] The *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 81. Smith also may have derived this principle from Cantillon's *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général* (Londres, 1755), which he had in his library and which he read. See the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 70. Smith also had in his library Marquis Mirabeau's *L'Ami des Hommes ou Traité de la Population* (Paris, 1763), which was based on Cantillon's *Essai sur la Nature du Commerce en Général*.

[3] See the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 82-83.

[4] Compare the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 309-310; II, 305, 426, with Franklin's *Remarks and Facts Concerning American Paper Money* (1767), Franklin (Smyth), V, 10-11. See also Hume's letter to Abbé Morellet, London, 10th July, 1769. J. H. Burton, *Life and Correspondence of David Hume*, II, 426-428. Smith obtained some of his information on the subject of American paper currency from Dr. William Douglass' *A Summary His-*

formation or ideas from Franklin on any other subjects prior to 1773.

Having ascertained the probable extent of Franklin's influence on Smith prior to 1773 and what additions the latter made to the manuscript of the *Wealth of Nations*, 1773-1775, one investigating the subject of Franklin's and Price's alleged assistance of Smith would naturally inquire if they possessed such special knowledge of the subjects treated in these additions that they might have been able to assist the author. Smith's remarks on the price of hides in the Chapter on Rent were written in February, 1773, before he left Scotland.[1] His comments on the decline of sugar-refining in the English West Indian islands, after France surrendered them to Great Britain, were added in October, 1773.[2] At this time Smith was in London, but he probably obtained no information from Franklin or Price, for they had no special knowledge of this subject. The passage which deals with American wages[3] was added in 1773 and probably at London. It is not unlikely that Franklin supplied Smith with information on this subject.[4] The

torical and Political (London, 1760), II, 334-335. Smith refers to this work in the *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), I, 309. Smith also may have read Thomas Pownall's *Administration of the British Colonies, their Rights, and Constitution discussed* (London, 1774), which contains information about American paper money. Smith had this book in his library, but when he came into possession of it is not known. See Bonar, op. cit., p. 91.

[1] Smith left Scotland for London early in April, 1773.

[2] The *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), II, 83.

[3] Ibid., I, 71-72.

[4] Franklin did not write *Reflections on the Augmentation of Wages*, which was included in Spark's and Bigelow's editions of Franklin's works. The unknown author of this piece acknowledges Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (Bk. I, Ch. VIII) as the source of his information relative to the wages which were paid to various classes of workmen in the province of New York before the American Revolution.

latter, however, does not acknowledge Franklin as the source of his information. He does not mention Franklin's name in the *Wealth of Nations*. The extensive additions in the Chapters on the Revenue, according to Rae, were written after 1774 when Smith had read Turgot's *Mémoires concernant les Droits*. Price, no doubt, could have supplied Smith with ideas on some of the subjects treated in these chapters, but the latter does not once mention his name in the *Wealth of Nations*. In a letter written December 22, 1785, Smith spoke slightingly of Price's ability as an economist: "Price's speculations cannot fail to sink into the neglect that they have always deserved. I have always considered him as a factious citizen, a most superficial philosopher, and by no means an able calculator."[1] There is no internal evidence in the chapters on the Revenue which would indicate that Franklin assisted Smith with them.

If Franklin aided Smith at all one would expect to find evidence of his assistance in the Chapter on Colonies. Here, indeed, one may find many subjects on which he could have given Smith information. In part II of this chapter Smith discusses the economic effects of cheap and plentiful lands in new colonies on the increase of population and the price of wages. This was a subject with which Franklin was familiar from personal observation in America and on which he had written.[2] Franklin was familiar with the American colonial laws governing the descent of

[1] Rae, op. cit., p. 400; Bonar, op. cit., p. 91.
[2] See Franklin's *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind*, Frank-

property, a subject which Smith also discusses. He would not, however, have agreed with Smith's assertion that the American colonies had been defended almost entirely at the expense of the mother country; for he had more than once contended that the American colonies contributed generously in men, money and provisions in the colonial wars against France. He also may have supplied Smith with facts relative to the whaling industry in New England. Franklin unquestionably knew more about America than any one in England and could have supplied Smith with almost any kind of information about America which the latter might have desired.

Smith, like Franklin, was opposed to the English mercantile system. The latter would have heartily agreed with Smith's conclusion that "The monopoly of the colony trade, therefore, like all the other mean and malignant expedients of the mercantile system, depresses the industry of all other countries, but chiefly that of the colonies, without in the least increasing, but on the contrary diminishing, that of the country in whose favour it is established." [1]

Smith clearly saw that Great Britain and the American colonies would be mutual gainers if the mother country voluntarily granted the colonies complete autonomy. He knew, however, that Great Britain would never do this and he advocated a plan

lin (Smyth), III, 65; also *The Interest of Great Britain Considered,* Franklin (Smyth), IV, 53-54 and note. As has been noted, Smith had two copies of the former essay (which he undoubtedly read before 1773) and one copy of the latter essay in his library.

[1] The *Wealth of Nations* (Cannan), II, 111.

of imperial federation to conciliate the American colonies. According to this plan Parliament was to have the power to tax the colonies by parliamentary requisition; and the colonies which consented to be taxed in this manner were to be allowed representation in Parliament apportioned according to the amounts they contributed to the public revenue of the Empire.

Franklin had undoubtedly come to the conclusion by 1775 that the American colonies would be better off if they were free from British control. He did not, however, then favor a severance of the political relationship that existed between Great Britain and her colonies and hoped, as Smith also did, that some mutually acceptable plan of conciliation might be evolved. Few men in Great Britain appreciated as well as Smith the viewpoint of the colonies in their disputes with Great Britain. Was this comprehension of the colonial side in these disputes due to Franklin's elucidation of the colonial point of view? Owing to the lack of evidence a satisfactory answer to this question cannot be given.[1]

It is impossible for many reasons to prove from internal evidence in the *Wealth of Nations* that Smith received assistance from Franklin in the composition of the Chapter on Colonies. Smith obtained his ideas

[1] There are no notes or memoranda in Franklin's writings which show that he discussed American colonial problems with Smith. Smith was not one of the group of Franklin's intimate friends at London, 1773-1775, for his name does not once appear in the *Journal of Josiah Quincy, jun., during his Voyage and Residence in England from September 28th, 1774 to March 3rd, 1775*. Quincy mentions meeting nearly all of Franklin's friends, but makes no reference to Smith.

from a multitude of sources. He quotes the titles or the authors of nearly one hundred books and undoubtedly used many more which he does not mention. Edwin Cannan in describing the way in which this work was composed says, "Usually but little, sometimes only a single fact, phrase or opinion, is taken from each, so that few authors are less open than Adam Smith to the reproach of having rifled another man's work." [1] The *Wealth of Nations* was not hastily written; it was composed during a period of at least twenty-seven years (1749-1776). During this time Smith also obtained much information from conversations with competent men. He was very critical of his authorities, always carefully considering different points of view. It is therefore apparent that internal evidence can afford little help in showing to what extent Franklin and Price assisted him.[2]

Franklin, Price and none of their mutual friends or contemporaries mention in their writings that Smith was assisted in the composition of the *Wealth of Nations*. Smith's writings also are silent on this point. If Franklin and Price did assist Smith why did they not mention this fact in their writings? It may be answered that they had no desire to injure Smith's reputation and that they would have gained no prestige or credit by claiming a share in the author-

[1] See Edwin Cannan's Introduction to his edition of the *Wealth of Nations*, I, XLVII.

[2] The problem of ascertaining the extent of Franklin's assistance of Smith becomes more complicated and perplexing when one considers that both derived many ideas from the writings of the Physiocrats.

ship of Smith's work. Smith would not have mentioned in his writings having received assistance from such "factious" persons as Franklin and Price who supported the American colonists in their revolution against Great Britain.[1] To have done so certainly would have been to impair, to some degree at least, the popularity his work had attained.[2] It is indeed doubtful if Franklin and Price appreciated the value of the *Wealth of Nations*. Smith himself is said to have believed that his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* possessed greater merit than the *Wealth of Nations*.[3]

Franklin's influence on Smith's economic thought prior to 1773 certainly was not great and the extent of his influence at London (1773-1775) was undoubtedly far less than Mrs. Logan's statements claim. Her statements, however, are corroborated by so much circumstantial evidence that they must be accepted as establishing the fact that Franklin and

[1] Dr. Price was opposed to Great Britain going to war with the colonists. He was generally believed to have been in favor of American independence. On October 6, 1778, the Continental Congress resolved to request Franklin, Lee and Adams to inform him that Congress desired to consider him a citizen and to have him assist in the regulation of the finances of the United States. An offer to provide funds for the removal of him and his family to America was also made by Congress. See *Dictionary of National Biography*, XLVI, 335; *Journals of the Continental Congress* (edited by W. C. Ford), XII (1778), 984-985.

[2] That the merits of the *Wealth of Nations* were recognized in England as well as in other countries is shown by the number of editions and translations which appeared during Smith's lifetime. Five English editions (1776, 1779, 1784, 1786 and 1789) were published before his death. Blavet made the first French translation which appeared in the *Journal de l'Agriculture du Commerce, des Finances, et des Arts*, 1779-1780. New editions were published in France in 1781 and 1788. In 1790, the year Smith died, Count Germain Garnier's classic French version was executed. The first German version, that of Friedrich Schiller, was published 1776-1778. The first Italian translation was made in 1780. The *Wealth of Nations* was printed at Amsterdam in 1784 and in the United States in 1789.

[3] Rae, op. cit., p. 436.

Price did give Smith some assistance while he was preparing the *Wealth of Nations* for the press. Probably it would not be far from the truth to say that on several occasions Smith submitted certain portions of his manuscript to Franklin and Price for their criticisms and suggestions, and that Franklin thoroughly acquainted him with the American colonial point of view in those disputes with Great Britain which caused the American Revolution.

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Chapter VII

FRANKLIN AND THE PHYSIOCRATS

MANY of Franklin's economic views prior to 1767 had their genesis in his hostile reaction to British Mercantilism. As colonial agent in England for Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Rhode Island and Massachusetts he endeavored to bring about the repeal or the modification of the parliamentary acts which these colonies found so oppressive. He used a variety of arguments to combat British colonial legislation. The assertion of his belief in free trade, for instance, challenged the justice of the Navigation Acts.[1] He denied the right of Parliament to levy taxes within the colonies[2] and opposed the restraints upon colonial manufacture. His efforts to secure the repeal of the Currency Act of 1764, which restrained the colonies from issuing paper money as a legal tender, were fruitless; but he played no small part in bringing about the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766. The Declaratory Act, which was passed when the latter act was repealed, asserted the right of Parliament to tax the colonies, but was merely regarded as an idle

[1] He favored intercolonial free trade as early as 1747. Franklin (Smyth), II, 313-314. See also his *Note Respecting Trade and Manufactures*, London, July 7, 1767. Franklin (Sparks), II, 366.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 419, 421, 422, 424. He opposed the right of Parliament to levy internal taxes in the American colonies on constitutional or legal grounds.

threat until the Townshend Acts (May, 1767), were passed. The latter acts created a furore of excitement in the colonies. Early in 1768 the Assembly of Massachusetts issued a circular letter to the assemblies of several other colonies suggesting opposition to these obnoxious acts; many political essays, including John Dickinson's *The Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, were written in protest; and the Virginia Resolves enunciated the principle that the right to levy taxes was in the general assembly with the governor's and King's consent. Associations of merchants in several of the colonies pledged themselves to refrain from importing and selling goods taxed by the Townshend Acts. Merchants who refused to enter into such associations were subjected to insult and violence. Such in brief was the colonial reaction to the Townshend Acts.

The French government watched the development of the opposition to the Townshend Acts with keen interest and probably hoped to take steps to obtain revenge on Great Britain for the conquest of her American possessions. Franklin's letter to his son, William, August 28, 1767, relating the circumstances under which he first visited France in 1767, gives us some idea of the interest that country was then taking in American colonial affairs:—

"Du Guerchy, the French ambassador, is gone home, and Monsieur Durand is left minister plenipotentiary. He is extremely curious to inform himself in the affairs of America; pretends to have a great esteem for me, on account of the abilities shown in

my examination; [1] has desired to have all my political writings, invited me to dine with him, was very inquisitive, treated me with great civility, makes me visits, &c. I fancy that intriguing nation would like very well to meddle on occasion, and blow up the coals between Britain and her colonies; but I hope we shall give them no opportunity.

"I write this in a great hurry, being setting out in an hour on another journey with my steady, good friend, Sir John Pringle.[2] We propose to visit Paris. Durand has given me letters of recommendation to the Lord knows who. I am told I shall meet with great respect there, but winds change, and perhaps it will be full as well if I do not. We shall be gone six weeks. I have a little private commission [3] to transact, of which more another time." [4]

Franklin's departure for France, August 28, 1767, where he remained until October 8, brought him into contact with a group of French *économistes* later known as the Physiocrats. Almost a year later he wrote the following letter to the Physiocrat, Du Pont de Nemours:

"I received your obliging letter of the 10th May, with the most acceptable present of your *Physiocratie*,[5] which I have read with great pleasure, and re-

[1] Franklin was examined in the House of Commons relative to the repeal of the Stamp Act, February 13, 1766. See Franklin (Smyth), IV, 412-448.

[2] Sir John Pringle, F.R.S. (1707-1782), physician to the British Royal family.

[3] The private commission which Franklin refers to was probably making arrangements for the translation and publication of his writings in France.

[4] Letter to William Franklin, Governor of New Jersey. Franklin (Smyth), V, 45-47.

[5] Du Pont's *Physiocratie, ou constitution naturelle du gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre humain* (Leyde et Paris, 1767 et 1768), 2 Vols. This work is printed in full in Eugène Daire's *Physiocrates* (Paris, 1846), Vol. I.

ceived from it a great deal of instruction. There is such a freedom from local and national prejudices and partialities, so much benevolence to mankind in general, so much goodness mixt with wisdom, in the principles of your new philosophy, that I am perfectly charmed with them, and I wish I could have stayed in France for some time, to have studied in your school, that I might by conversing with its founders have made myself quite a master of that philosophy. . . . I had, before I went into your country, seen some letters of yours to Dr. Templeman,[1] that gave me a high opinion of the doctrines you are engaged in cultivating and of your personal talents and abilities, which made me greatly desirous of seeing you. Since I had not that good fortune, the next best thing is the advantage you are so good to offer me of your correspondence, which I shall ever highly value, and endeavour to cultivate with all the diligence I am capable of.

"I am sorry to find that that wisdom which sees the welfare of the parts in the prosperity of the whole, seems not yet to be known in this country. . . . We are so far from conceiving that what is best for mankind, or even for Europe in general, may be best for us, that we are even studying to establish and extend a separate interest of Britain, to the prejudice of even Ireland and our colonies. . . . It is from your philosophy only that the maxims of a contrary and more happy conduct are to be drawn, which I therefore sin-

[1] Dr. Peter Templeman (1711-1769), Secretary of the London Society of Arts, of which Franklin was a member.

cerely wish may grow and increase till it becomes the governing philosophy of the human species, as it must be that of superior beings in better worlds. I will take the liberty of sending you a little fragment that has some tincture of it, which, on that account, I hope may be acceptable.

"Be so good as to present my sincere respect to that venerable apostle, Dr. Quesnay,[1] and to the illustrious Ami des Hommes [2] (of whose civilities to me at Paris I retain a grateful remembrance), and believe me to be, with real and very great esteem Sir,

"Your obliged and most obedient humble servant

"B. FRANKLIN." [3]

The sect of *économistes*, known as the Physiocrats, was founded in 1757 by Dr. François Quesnay and constituted what may be rightly called the first school of economic thought. Quesnay's famous *Tableau Oeconomique*,[4] which was published in 1758, endeavored to show how wealth circulated among the various social classes of France. In 1760 appeared his *Maximes Général du Gouvernement économique d'un Royaume agricole*, which further expounded and developed his *Tableau*. Quesnay's disciple and co-

[1] Dr. François Quesnay (1694-1774), the founder of the Physiocratic school.

[2] Franklin refers to Marquis de Mirabeau by his nickname, *L'Ami des Hommes*, which was derived from the title of his tremendously popular *L'Ami des Hommes, ou traité de la population* (1756). Barbeu Dubourg, who supervised the translation and the printing of Franklin's writings, introduced the latter at one of the meetings of the *économistes* who assembled for a time on each Tuesday at the home of Marquis de Mirabeau in Paris.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), V, 155-156.

[4] Professor Stephen Bauer of the University of Basel discovered a very rare first edition of this work, corrected by Quesnay, in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris. A facsimile was published by the British Economic Association in 1894.

worker, Marquis de Mirabeau, contributed two works to Physiocratic literature, *La Théorie de l'Impôt* (1760) and *La Philosophie rurale* (1763). Perhaps the most complete statement of the economic doctrines of the Physiocrats was Mercier de La Rivière's *L'Ordre naturel et essentiel des Sociétés politiques* (1767). In January, 1767, the Physiocrats began to issue the monthly journal, *Ephémérides du Citoyen, ou Bibliothèque des Sciences morales et politiques*, and in May, 1768, Du Pont de Nemours became the editor. To the latter, perhaps, more than to any other of the *économistes*, belongs the credit for disseminating their economic theories. His *Physiocratie, ou constitution naturelle du gouvernement le plus avantageux au genre humain* (1767-1768) gave the school which Quesnay founded its name, the Physiocratic; and the body of its doctrines the designation, Physiocracy. The most famous of all the men who accepted Physiocratic doctrines was Turgot, who served as intendant of Limoges, and who was the first comptroller-general of the reign of Louis XVI. Turgot accepted the theory that agriculture alone produced wealth and that a single tax on the net product of agriculture was the best form of taxation; but in certain particulars he made departures from the theories of the Physiocrats. His best work, *Réflexions sur la formation et la distribution des richesses*, written in 1766, appeared in the *Ephémérides* in 1769 and 1770.

Franklin became well acquainted with all of these men except Mercier de La Rivière. He also knew

many other Physiocrats of lesser note such as Abbé Morellet, Barbeu Dubourg, Abbé Badeau and Le Veillard. Not only did he know these men personally but he also read their writings and subscribed for the Physiocratic monthly journal, *Ephémérides du Citoyen,* in which a number of his writings appeared. Franklin's economic writings after 1767 show unmistakably the influence of the Physiocrats. In fact it would be nearly correct to say that his economic theories after 1767 were the same as those held by this school.

Franklin's ready acceptance of Physiocracy may be explained by the fact that both he and the Physiocrats were opponents of Mercantilism. France as well as the American colonies suffered economic distress under this system, and the Physiocrats formulated a body of doctrines which challenged the validity and justice of its economic theories. Physiocracy was the very antithesis of Mercantilism. In it Franklin found effective arguments with which he could combat British Mercantilism. Furthermore, he had worked out a system of economic reasoning which in many respects coincided with the theories of the Physiocrats. Long before he met members of this school he had come to believe in international free trade and in the unwisdom and injustice of the British government's regulation of the economic activities of the American colonies which were in many ways hampered and restrained from complete and normal growth. The economy of all the American colonies was predominantly agricultural and Franklin believed that the

economic prosperity of his country was largely dependent on the promotion of its agriculture. In the Physiocratic system agriculture was the source of wealth, a doctrine also in accordance with Franklin's own conclusions.

The Physiocrats identified wealth with material objects and production with stuff-making. They assumed that agriculture, and possibly the other extractive industries,[1] produced a surplus product, a *produit net* as they called it. According to Quesnay and his followers, proprietors of land and agricultural laborers were the productive classes of society. The former class was considered productive because it made expenditures to bring the land into cultivation and also to keep it producing. Agricultural laborers were regarded as a productive class, because, under normal conditions, they produced more goods than they consumed. All other persons—artisans, manufacturers, merchants, servants, members of liberal professions—produced no surplus product and were considered *sterile* or unproductive. Manufacture merely changed the form of raw material, but made no addition to the quantity. Since wages were regarded as subsistence wages a laborer, while making an article, was supposed to consume a quantum of value equivalent to that which he created.

Franklin accepted this part of Physiocratic doctrine within five months after his return to England from his first visit to France. At this time he had read

1 Whether the Physiocrats regarded the other extractive industries, such as mining and fishing, as capable of furnishing a net product is a debatable question. See C. Gide and C. Rist, *A History of Economic Doctrines*, p. 14.

none of the writings of the Physiocrats except Du Pont de Nemours' letters to Dr. Peter Templeman, Secretary of the London Society of Arts. On February 20, 1768, he wrote Cadwalader Evans from London regarding Great Britain's prohibition of certain manufactures in the American colonies:

"But there are many manufactures that we cannot carry on to advantage, though we were at entire liberty. And, after all, this country is fond of manufactures beyond their real value, for the true source of riches is husbandry. Agriculture is truly *productive of new wealth;* manufactures only change forms, and, whatever value they give to the materials they work upon, they in the mean time consume an equal value in provisions, &c. So that riches are not *increased* by manufacturing; the only advantage is, that provisions in the shape of manufactures are more easily carried for sale to foreign markets. And where the provisions cannot be easily carried to market, it is well to transform them for our own use as well as foreign sale. In families also, where the children and servants of families have some spare time, it is well to employ it in making something, and in spinning or knitting, &c., *to gather up the fragments* (of time) that nothing may be lost, for those fragments, though small in themselves, amount to something great in the year, and the family must eat, whether they work or are idle." [1]

In this letter the influence of the Physiocrats is

[1] To Cadwalader Evans, London, Feb. 20, 1768. Franklin (Smyth), V, 102.

plainly discernible. He had accepted their doctrines that agriculture alone produced new wealth, and that manufacture was *sterile* in the sense that it created no additional wealth. He saw, however, as the Physiocrats also did, that manufacture was a useful industry. He believed that the value of food consumed during the process of manufacture might be transferred to the raw materials which were wrought into manufactured goods. The latter, less bulky, lighter and less perishable than provisions, would be easier to transport. When food products could not easily be carried to market people might conserve their value by making manufactured goods for their own consumption and for sale in foreign markets. The value of food consumed during periods of enforced idleness might also be conserved if people engaged in manufacture. In this letter Franklin attempted to point out how Physiocratic theories might be applied to advantage in America where inadequate means of transportation often prevented the carriage of food products to markets from inland parts of the country.

Du Pont de Nemours became editor of the *Ephémérides* in May, 1768, and was anxious to print some of Franklin's writings in the Physiocratic publication. Although he had not met Franklin during the latter's visit at Paris in 1767 he had become acquainted with some of the writings which Franklin had given Barbeu Dubourg to include in the French edition of his works. Du Pont had already translated some of these into French when he wrote to Franklin, May

10, 1768, stating that he was sending him two works, his *Physiocratie*[1] and a short *résumé*[2] which he had made of Quesnay's doctrines. Franklin read these works within the next three months and thus became acquainted with the formal exposition of Physiocratic doctrines.[3]

One of Franklin's hitherto unpublished writings, *Remark on Chap. XI. of the Consid^ns. on Policy, Trade, &c.*,[4] which was probably written in 1767 or 1768, shows not only his reaction to Mercantilism but also to what extent he had then accepted Physiocratic doctrines:

"Suppose Husbandry well understood & thoroughly practised in a Country, and all the Lands fully cultivated,

"Those employ'd in the Cultivation will then raise more Corn & other Provisions than they can consume.

"But they will want Manufactures.

"Suppose each Family may make all that is necessary for itself.

"Then the Overplus Corn must be sold & exported.

"Farms near the Sea or navigable Rivers may do this easily. But those distant will find it difficult.

[1] Du Pont's *Physiocratie* consists of a collection of the principal economic works of Quesnay. Du Pont, as editor, added a preliminary discourse, notes, and a table of contents.

[2] The short *résumé* which Du Pont sent to Franklin was probably his *De l'origine et des progrès d'une science nouvelle* (London and Paris, 1767).

[3] See Franklin's letter to Du Pont de Nemours, London, July 28, 1768. Franklin (Smyth), V, 155-156.

[4] This paper was written by way of comment on and criticism of a chapter in a book which Franklin had read, probably Chapter XI, Book II of Sir James Denham Steuart's *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy* (London, 1767). Franklin's manuscript may be found in *The Original Correspondence of Benjamin Franklin with the Bishop of St. Asaph*, p. 24, at the Mason Library.

From some the Expence of carriage will exceed the Value of the Commodity. Therefore if some other Means of Making an Advantage of it are not discovered, the Cultivator will abate of his Labour & raise no more than he can consume in his Family.

"But tho' his Corn may not bear the Expence of Carriage to Market, nor his Flax nor his Wooll, yet possibly Linen & Woollen Cloth may bear it. Therefore if he can draw around him working People who have no Lands on which to subsist, and who will for the Corn & other Subsistence he can furnish them with, work up his Flax and Wooll into Cloth, then is his Corn also turn'd into Cloth, and with his Flax & Wooll render'd portable, so that it may easily be carry'd to Market, and the Value brought home in Money. This seems the chief Advantage of Manufactures. For those working People seldom receive more than a bare Subsistence for their Labour and the very Reason why Six penny Worth of Flax is worth perhaps twenty Shillings after they have wrought it into Cloth, is, that they have during the Operation consum'd nineteen Shillings and six pence worth of Provision.

"So that the Value of Manufactures arises out of the Earth, and is not the Creation of Labour as commonly supposed.

"When a grain of Corn is put into the Ground it may produce ten Grains. After defraying the Expence, here is a real Increase of Wealth.—Above we see that Manufactures make no Addition to it, they only change its Form.—So Trade, or the Exchange of

Manufactures, makes no Increase of Wealth among Mankind in general; no more than the Game of Commerce at Cards makes any Increase of Money among the Company, tho' particular Persons may be Gainers while others are Losers. But the clear Produce of Agriculture is clear additional Wealth."

The last paragraph of the paper quoted above shows that Franklin had accepted the Physiocrats' conception of the nature of exchange. They regarded fair exchange as a transfer of equal values. "Exchange," said the Physiocrat Le Trosne, "is a contract of equality, equal value being given in exchange for equal value. Consequently it is not a means of increasing wealth, for one gives as much as the other receives, but it is a means of satisfying wants and of varying enjoyment." [1] The *économistes,* however, realized that one party to an exchange might enrich himself at the expense of another as when one of them did not know the cost of producing the articles offered for sale. On this point Mercier de La Rivière wrote, "After all merchants are only traffickers, and the trafficker is just a person who employs his ability in appropriating a part of other people's wealth." [2]

Franklin's paper, *Remark on Chap. XI. of the Consid*^{ns}*. on Policy, Trade, &c.,* contains the statement: "So that the value of Manufactures arise out of the Earth, and is not the Creation of Labour as commonly supposed." This statement shows that he had abandoned the theory of value which he had held

[1] Quoted from C. Gide and C. Rist, *A History of Economic Doctrines,* p. 27, note 1.

[2] Ibid., p. 28, note 4.

before the Physiocrats exerted an influence on his economic thought. Having derived his early theory of value from Sir William Petty he had believed that the value of a commodity was determined by the amount of labor measured by the time required to produce or to procure it. In a letter to Lord Kames, in February, 1769, Franklin also indicates that he had abandoned the "labor-time" cost theory of value when he wrote: "Food is *always* necessary to *all;* and much the greatest part of the labour of mankind is employed in raising provisions for the mouth. Is not this kind of labour, then, the fittest to be the standard by which to measure the values of all other labour, and consequently of all other things whose value depends on the labour of making or procuring them?" [1] The two passages from his writings quoted in this paragraph indicate that he was in accord with the Physiocrats in the belief that only agricultural labor was productive of new wealth and that this kind of labor was the fittest measure of the value of all commodities.

Franklin's *Positions to be examined, concerning National Wealth* (April 4, 1769), which was written before his second visit to Paris in 1769, also clearly shows the influence of Physiocratic doctrines on his economic thought. A comparison of this piece with Physiocratic theories regarding the productivity of agriculture and the *sterility* of manufacture and commerce will show how completely he had accepted the

[1] Letter to Kames, February 21, 1769. Franklin (Smyth), V, 195.

doctrines of Physiocracy in 1769. It is therefore printed in full below.

"1. All food or subsistence for mankind arises from the earth or waters.

2. Necessaries of life, that are not food, and all other conveniences, have their values estimated by the proportion of food consumed while we are employed in procuring them.

3. A small people, with a large territory, may subsist on the productions of nature, with no other labour than that of gathering the vegetables and catching the animals.

4. A large people, with a small territory, finds these insufficient, and, to subsist, must labour the earth, to make it produce greater quantities of vegetable food, suitable for the nourishment of men, and of the animals they intend to eat.

5. From this labour arises a *great increase* of vegetable and animal food, and of materials for clothing, as flax, wool, silk, &c. The superfluity of these is wealth. With this wealth we pay for the labour employed in building our houses, cities, &c., which are therefore only subsistence thus metamorphosed.

6. *Manufactures* are only *another shape* into which so much provisions and subsistence are turned, as were equal in value to the manufactures produced. This appears from hence, that the manufacturer does not, in fact, obtain from the employer, for his labour, *more* than a mere subsistence, including raiment, fuel, and shelter; all which derive their value from the provisions consumed in procuring them.

7. The produce of the earth, thus converted into manufactures, may be more easily carried to distant markets than before such conversion.

8. *Fair commerce* is, where equal values are exchanged for equal, the expense of transport included. Thus, if it costs A in England as much labour and charge to raise a bushel of wheat, as it costs B in France to produce four gallons of wine, then are four gallons of wine the fair exchange for a bushel of wheat, A and B meeting at half distance with their commodities to make the exchange. The advantage of this fair commerce is, that each party increases the number of his enjoyments, having, instead of wheat alone, or wine alone, the use of both wheat and wine.

9. Where the labour and expense of producing both commodities are known to both parties, bargains will generally be fair and equal. Where they are known to one party only, bargains will often be unequal, knowledge taking its advantage of ignorance.

10. Thus, he that carries one thousand bushels of wheat abroad to sell, may not probably obtain so great a profit thereon, as if he had first turned the wheat into manufactures, by subsisting therewith the workmen while producing those manufactures; since there are many expediting and facilitating methods of working, not generally known; and strangers to the manufactures, though they know pretty well the expense of raising wheat, are unacquainted with those short methods of working, and, thence being apt to suppose more labour employed in the manufactures than there really is, are more easily imposed on in

their value, and induced to allow more for them than they are honestly worth.

11. Thus the advantage of having manufactures in a country does not consist, as is commonly supposed, in their highly advancing the value of rough materials, of which they are formed; since, though six penny worth of flax may be worth twenty shillings, when worked into lace, yet the very cause of its being worth twenty shillings is, that, besides the flax, it has cost nineteen shillings and sixpence in subsistence to the manufacturer. But the advantage of manufactures is, that under their shape provisions may be more easily carried to a foreign market; and, by their means, our traders may more easily cheat strangers. Few, where it is not made, are judges of the value of lace. The importer may demand forty, and perhaps get thirty, shillings for that which cost him but twenty.

12. Finally, there seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth. The first is by *war*, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbours. This is *robbery*. The second by *commerce*, which is generally *cheating*. The third by *agriculture*, the only *honest way*, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favour, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry."[1]

In July, 1769, Franklin again went to Paris where he remained until about September 1. His reasons

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 200-202.

for going to France in 1769 were the same as in 1767. He wished to confer with Barbeu Dubourg regarding the publication of a French edition of his works, the translation of which by Lesqui, under Dubourg's supervision, was progressing rather slowly. The latter was an avowed Physiocrat and had first introduced Franklin to the *économistes* who held weekly meetings (each Tuesday) at the home of Marquis de Mirabeau at Paris. It is not known how often Franklin attended these Tuesday assemblies on his second visit to Paris, but he undoubtedly widened his circle of acquaintances among members of the school. He spoke French fairly well at this time and read it with ease.

The *économistes* took a lively interest in American colonial affairs and were very anxious to obtain information relative to the disturbances which were occasioned by the Stamp Act (1765) and the Townshend Acts (1767). In a letter to Samuel Cooper, London, September 30, 1769, Franklin wrote that American grievances against Great Britain were well known in France where his "Examination" [1] and John Dickinson's "Farmer's Letters, with two of my Pieces anex'd," had been printed.

In 1769, after he returned to London, Franklin wrote Dubourg that he was sending some "Sheets of

[1] Franklin was examined in the House of Commons relative to the repeal of the Stamp Act, February 13, 1766. Barbeu Dubourg wrote Franklin from Paris, May 8, 1768, stating that he was anxious to have his writings translated together with his "Examination," a rough draft of which he had presented before the Tuesday assemblies of the Physiocrats at the house of Marquis de Mirabeau. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 83.

the Piece now Printing."[1] The following writings of Franklin appeared in the *Ephémérides* during the life of the publication: *On the Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor* (1766), *Examination in the British House of Commons Relative to the Repeal of the American Stamp Act, in 1766* (1767), *Preface to the Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania*[2] (1768), and *Plan for benefiting Distant unprovided Countries*[3] (1771).[4] Franklin was a subscriber to the *Ephémérides* as long as it was printed,[5] and probably aided Du Pont de Nemours in securing subscriptions for the journal in England.

Franklin possessed economic works of Quesnay, Turgot, Morellet, and many other Physiocratic writings. He highly valued Du Pont de Nemours' *Du Commerce et de la Compagnie des Indies* (1770). In thanking the author for the gift of this work he wrote (October 2, 1770):

"Accept my sincere Acknowledgements and

[1] It is impossible to tell what piece of writing Franklin here refers to. His *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* appeared in London in 1769 and contained his essay, *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind, Peopling of Countries*, written in 1751. He may allude to this essay which no doubt would have been of interest to the Physiocrats.

[2] *The Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, written by John Dickinson of Pennsylvania in 1767. Franklin (Smyth), V, 127-129.

[3] The introductory paragraphs of this piece were written by Mr. Dalrymple; the actual "Plan" by Dr. Franklin.

[4] The dates in parenthesis after the titles of these pieces are the dates of their publication in England and not in the *Ephémérides*. The list of Franklin's writings given above is probably incomplete. The only complete set of the *Ephémérides* is at the library of the University of Giessen, Germany. The writer has not had an opportunity to examine the series.

[5] The publication of the *Ephémérides du Citoyen* was discontinued in May, 1772. There were 63 volumes of the series and the last number bears the date, March, 1772. Franklin seems to have received most of the numbers which appeared from 1767 to 1772.

Thanks for the valuable Present you made me of your excellent Work on the Commerce of the India Company, which I have perused with much Pleasure and Instruction. It bears throughout the stamp of your Masterly Hand, in Method, Perspicuity, & Force of Argument. The honourable Mention you have made in it of your Friend is extremely obliging. I was already too much in your Debt for Favours of that kind.

"I purpose returning to America in the ensuing Summer, if our Disputes should be adjusted, as I hope they will be in the next Session of Parliament. Would to God I could take with me Messrs. du Pont, du Bourg, and some other French Friends with their good Ladies! I might then, by mixing them with my Friends in Philadelphia, form a little happy Society that would prevent my ever wishing again to visit Europe." [1]

Another of Du Pont's writings much prized by Franklin was his *Table raisonnée* (1775). At the request of his English friend, Benjamin Vaughan, Franklin in 1779 sent a copy of this work to him from France and stated that he thought it was "an excellent Thing, as it contains in a clear Method all the principles of that new sect, called here *les Economistes*." [2]

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 281-282.

[2] Ibid., VII, 413. Du Pont's *Table raisonnée des Principes de l'Economie politique* (1775) was similar to his *Abrégé des Principes de l'Economie politique* (1772) which he composed for the Margrave of Baden. The latter work may be found in Eugène Daire's *Physiocrates* (Paris, 1846), I, 367-385. Thomas Mante, an English prisoner of war in France, translated the *Table raisonnée* into English and wrote to Franklin, February 22, 1779, requesting permission to dedicate the translation to him. See Turgot's letter to Du Pont, Paris, March 13, 1779. *Oeuvres de Turgot* (edited by Schelle), V, 588; also *Calendar Franklin Papers*, II, 31.

Quesnay and his followers assumed that agriculture produced a net product or a rent. This was the only industry, according to the Physiocrats, which produced a surplus (*produit net*) after all expenses of production had been paid. In agriculture nature worked with man to create this surplus or *produit net*, but not in other industries or employments. Wages were subsistence wages. Hence a person employed in manufacture or in commerce could not create more value than he consumed in living. The Physiocrats, however, recognized that savings were possible in these industries when persons employed in them curtailed their normal consumption of agricultural products. Under such conditions more value could be created than would be destroyed in consumption. Under normal conditions, however, the industrial, commercial and professional classes made no addition to the stock of wealth, i.e., of material things, and were designated as *sterile* or unproductive.

Since the net product of agriculture was the only true revenue it followed logically, according to this system of reasoning, that it should bear the burden of taxation. Reasoning in this manner the Physiocrats advocated a single, simple and direct tax (*impôt unique*) on the net product of agriculture. Franklin became familiar with this proposed method of taxation in the writings of Quesnay, Du Pont and Turgot which he possessed and read. Theoretically he believed in this kind of tax, but, so far as is known, does not seem to have advocated it in the United States.

Allan Ramsay, the Scotch painter and friend of

Adam Smith, wrote in 1766, and published at London in 1769, a pamphlet entitled, *Thoughts of the Origin and Nature of Government.* Franklin owned a copy of this pamphlet and in reading it made written comments on the margins of the pages.[1] Ramsay wrote in support of Great Britain's measures of colonial taxation. On the margin of page 45 Franklin refuted Ramsay's arguments in support of the British Parliament's acts of taxation in the colonies with this comment: "Taxes must be paid out of the Produce of the Land. There is not other possible Fund." On the following page (46) he wrote, "Merchants, Manufacturers, &c. pay no Taxes really, but only apparently: For they rate their Goods in Proportion to the Consumers." These comments show that Franklin, like the Physiocrats, was opposed to indirect taxation, and believed, as they did, that the burden of taxation would eventually fall on the net product of agriculture.

Turgot, Franklin's intimate friend, who accepted the Physiocratic theory of taxation, wrote a *Mémoire*[2] for him on the subject of indirect taxation. In this *Mémoire* Turgot argued that all indirect taxes were eventually paid by the proprietors of the land. These taxes, he said, would enhance the price of commodities consumed by all classes of society. The cultivators of the soil would meet the increased costs of living and of production, resulting from this form of taxation, by taking more of the products of the land.

[1] A photostat copy of this pamphlet containing Franklin's marginal comments may be found at the Mason Library.

[2] *Oeuvres de Turgot*, edited by Gustave Schelle, V, 510-516.

This would leave the proprietors with a smaller fund from which to pay taxes and also those advances of capital which they necessarily had to make not only to bring land into cultivation but also to keep it producing. The *sterile class*—artisans, merchants, capitalists, etc.—had no way of increasing its income, for it always consumed all it produced. Therefore to meet its increased costs of living it would have to be given more of the products of the land. The increased living and production costs of this class would always be paid by the productive classes, the cultivators of the soil and the proprietors of the land, from the products of the soil. The former, however, would not feel the burden of this because they could make a deduction from the products of the land, thus leaving the proprietors a smaller fund than they formerly received. The proprietors would have to pay taxes to the government and they would also have to make advances of capital to bring the land into cultivation and other advances, too, in order to keep it producing. Since the proprietors would have smaller funds from which to make these advances, the land would produce less and the whole state would suffer. Turgot therefore advocated an *impôt territorial* (*impôt unique*), a simple, direct tax on the net products of agriculture.

Franklin's "Doubts"[1] on Turgot's *Mémoire* show that he did not believe that an *impôt territorial* could be used as a form of taxation in certain cases and in

[1] *Oeuvres de Turgot*, V, 516. Turgot made a transcript of Franklin's criticisms of his *Mémoire* which appears in Turgot's works under the title, *Doutes de Franklin*.

certain countries. According to the Physiocrats (who had France in mind when they made the classification) there were three classes of society—proprietors of the land, cultivators of the soil and a *sterile* class which comprised all persons who gained a livelihood second hand. Their system of economic thought was evolved in an agricultural country and was intended to be applicable in countries whose economy was chiefly agricultural.

In the "Doubts" or comments on Turgot's *Mémoire* Franklin pointed out that there might be some countries in which the proprietors owned all the lands which they might rent for fixed, annual amounts. In such countries he thought that the proprietors' rents could be easily determined and taxed.

He also called attention to another situation: there might be some countries where all the lands were worked by the proprietors themselves. In this case Franklin believed that the proprietors' surplus would vary in amount and in value from year to year and would therefore be difficult to determine for purposes of taxation if an *impôt territorial* were used.

He doubted whether this tax could be used at all in a state like ancient Tyre which was said to have been "only an arid rock," and in which there obviously could have been no revenues from the land. In such a state the entire population gained a livelihood from "industry and the investment of money."

He could not see how an *impôt territorial* could be applied in other countries, such as Holland, where commerce and agriculture were carried on together.

Here land yielded only a small revenue. A much greater revenue was derived from the investment of money in the purchase and sale of foreign commodities. Another considerable revenue was also obtained by loaning money to foreign countries.[1]

Franklin unquestionably believed that all taxes would eventually be paid out of the *produit net* of the land. These "Doubts" on Turgot's *Mémoire,* however, indicate that he did not believe that an *impôt territorial* could be used as the only form of taxation in all countries. Long before the Physiocrats began to exert any influence on his economic thought he had arrived at conclusions similar to Turgot's: that indirect taxes, such as import duties, would disorganize normal, natural trade relations; that they would be expensive and difficult to collect; that payments of them would be evaded and that smuggling of the goods on which they were levied would result from their imposition.[2]

Unlike most of the Physiocrats, Turgot and Franklin both justified the taking of interest on loans. Both believed that the market rate of interest depended on the relation between the supply of and demand for capital, and both justified the necessity of natural interest on similar grounds: a definite amount of capital would have to yield a definite in-

[1] Turgot's reply to Franklin's "Doubts" may be found in *Oeuvres de Turgot,* V, 517-519.

[2] See, for instance, Franklin's letter to Jared Eliot, Philadelphia, July 16, 1747, which was written thirty years before he met the Physiocrats. Franklin (Smyth), II, 313-314.

terest because it would buy a piece of land which would yield a definite rent.[1]

The Physiocrats adopted as the basic principle of their system of economic thought the conception of the "natural order." This was an ideal order as opposed to the "positive order" in which human laws and regulations governed the activities of individuals. The "natural order" was of divine origin. In the words of M. Gide ". . . the 'natural order' was that order which seemed obviously the best, not to any individual whomsoever, but to rational, cultured, liberal-minded men like the Physiocrats. It was not the product of the observation of external facts; it was the revelation of a principle within." [2]

The multitudinous governmental regulations of industry and the host of unequal and unjust taxes of the Colbertian régime in France violated the "natural order," and were vigorously opposed by the Physiocrats. They advocated a policy of *laissez faire* and only that amount of government as would permit the free functioning of the "natural order." They believed in free trade because they desired freedom of domestic commerce, and because the "natural order," on which their system was founded, being divine in origin and universal in its scope, could therefore recognize no natural boundaries or barriers.

Franklin's views corresponded with those of the Physiocrats in many aspects of their conception of the

[1] Compare passages of Turgot's *Réflexions* as noted by Eugen v. Böhm-Bawerk in his *Capital and Interest*, 64-65, with Franklin (Smyth), II, 150-151.
[2] C. Gide and C. Rist, *A History of Economic Doctrines*, p. 9.

"natural order." Few writers of the eighteenth century probably did more than Franklin to discredit Mercantilist doctrines in the popular mind of America and Europe. During the period of his employment as colonial agent in England (1757-1762, 1764-1775) his writings constantly challenged Mercantilism. He was associated with the French *économistes* in promulgating an antithetical system of economic thought which, scientifically developed by Adam Smith and later economists, was to bring Mercantilism into disrepute in the nineteenth century. Even before he met the Physiocrats he condemned governmental regulations in the sphere of economic life. In his *Remarks on the Plan for Regulating Indian Affairs,* which was probably written in 1766, he stated that, "It seems contrary to the Nature of Commerce, for Government to interfere in the Prices of Commodities. Trade is a voluntary Thing between Buyer and Seller, in every Article of which each exercises his own Judgment, and is to please himself." [1] After he met the Physiocrats his economic writings, many of which appeared in the English and Continental press, abound with statements denouncing governmental regulations of industry and interference with the economic activities of people. In the judgment of a younger contemporary, the Scotch philosopher and economist, Dugald Stewart (1753-1828), "the expressions *laissez-faire* and *pas trop gouverner* are indebted chiefly for their extensive circulation to the short and luminous comments of

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 469.

Franklin, which had so extraordinary an influence on public opinion in the old and new world." [1]

Franklin's approval and advocacy of the maxims, *laissez-faire* and *pas trop gouverner* is shown by his high valuation of a tract,[2] *The Principles of Trade* (1774), which, although largely the work of George Whatley, was partly his own composition.[3] In this work occurs the statement that "freedom and protection [4] are most indisputable principles whereon the success of trade must depend, as clearly as an open, good road tends towards a safe and speedy intercourse; nor is there a greater enemy to trade than constraint." Franklin agreed with the Physiocrats in insisting that governments should permit the perfect freedom of trade.

Like the Physiocrats Franklin advocated free trade, but his reasons for favoring it were at first different from theirs. The British Navigation Acts had their origin in Mercantilism just as the regulations of industry and the internal taxes of France had their genesis in Colbertism. Franklin and the Physiocrats were hostile to Mercantilism, but supported domestic and foreign free trade on different bases. The Physiocrats advocated freedom of trade because it was in accordance with their conception of the divine, universal, "natural order"; Franklin chiefly favored it

[1] Quoted from the article on Franklin in Palgrave's *Dictionary of Political Economy*. Ed. by Henry Higgs (London, 1923).

[2] Franklin's letter to George Whatley. Passy, August 21, 1784. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 264-265.

[3] Franklin (Sparks), II, 383-384, 401.

[4] By "protection" the authors meant that government should take measures to insure the perfect freedom of commerce.

because tariff barriers led to international retaliations and caused smuggling. As early as 1747 he had asserted his belief in intercolonial free trade, and pointed out that if a colony taxed commodities coming from another the latter would only retaliate by taxing the goods of the former. Thus neither would gain by a policy of protection.[1] He advanced the same kind of argument against the prohibition of importations and in support of free international trade in his *Note Respecting Trade and Manufactures* (1767):

"Suppose a country, X, with three manufactures, as *cloth, silk, iron,* supplying three other countries, A, B, C, but is desirous of increasing the vent, and raising the price of cloth in favor of her own clothiers.

"In order to this, she forbids the importation of foreign cloth from A.

"A, in return, forbids silks from X.

"Then the silk-workers complain of a decay of trade.

"And X, to content them, forbids silks from B.

"B, in return, forbids iron ware from X.

"Then the iron-workers complain of decay.

"And X forbids the importation of iron from C.

"C, in return, forbids cloth from X.

"What is got by all these prohibitions?

"*Answer.*—All four find their common stock of the enjoyments and conveniences of life diminished." [2]

[1] See Franklin's letter to Jared Eliot, July 16, 1747. Franklin (Smyth), II, 313-314.

[2] Franklin (Sparks), II, 366.

Franklin's acceptance of the Physiocratic concept of the "natural order" may be inferred from his comments on the page margins of a pamphlet, entitled *Reflections Moral and Political on Great Britain and her Colonies* (1770).[1] In commenting on the condition of people in civil societies in the margin of page 2 of this pamphlet he wrote: "Happiness is more generally & equally diffus'd among Savages than in our civiliz'd Societies. No European who has once tasted Savage Life, can afterwards bear to live in our Societies. The Care & Labour of providing for artificial & fashionable Wants, the Sight of so many Rich wallowing in superfluous Plenty, whereby so many are kept poor & distress'd by Want: The Insolence of Office, the Snares, & Plagues of Law, the Restraints of Custom, all contribute to disgust them with what we call civil Society." On the margin of page 54 of the same pamphlet appears this statement: "To keep People in England by Compulsion, is to make England a Prison & every Englishman [a Prisoner].[2] The Right of Migration is common to all Men, a natural Right."

Franklin seems never to have abandoned his early theoretical opinions regarding the advantages of free trade and direct taxation. In 1785 Pennsylvania passed a tariff measure to protect her manufacturing industries. On his return to America (1785) he was chosen President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, an office which he held for three

[1] This pamphlet may be found at the Mason Library. It was probably written by Captain Matthew Wheelock.

[2] The words in brackets were added by the writer as the context strongly suggests that Franklin had them in mind.

years (October 17, 1785—November 5, 1788). The Physiocrats, on hearing that Pennsylvania had adopted a tariff measure, and knowing that Franklin was the supreme executive there, thought he had ceased to believe in free trade and direct taxation, and that he was no longer in sympathy with Physiocratic doctrines. His letter to Alexander Small, September 28, 1787, however, indicates that he believed in the theory of free trade and direct taxation well towards the end of his life. He wrote Small as follows: "I have not lost any of the Principles of Public Oeconomy you once knew me possess'd of; but, to get the bad Customs of a Country chang'd, and new ones, though better, introduc'd, it is necessary first to remove the Prejudices of the People, enlighten their ignorance, and convince them that their Interest will be promoted by the propos'd Changes; and this is not the Work of a Day. Our Legislators are all Land-holders; and they are not yet persuaded, that all taxes are finally paid by the Land. Besides, our Country is so sparsely settled, the Habitations, particularly in the Back Countries, being perhaps 5 or 6 Miles distant from each other, that the Time and Labour of the Collector in going from House to House, and being oblig'd to call often before he can recover the Tax, amounts to more than the Tax is worth, and therefore, we have been forc'd into the Mode of indirect Taxes, i.e. Duties on Importation of Goods, and Excises." [1]

In summary it may be said that Franklin agreed with the following tenets of Physiocratic doctrine:

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 614-615.

1. Agriculture was the only industry which produced new wealth. Agricultural labor was therefore the only labor which was truly productive. All other kinds of labor were *sterile* or unproductive.

2. Manufacture changed the form of raw material and was a useful industry, but made no addition to the stock of wealth.

3. Fair exchange was the transfer of equal values. Enrichment by exchange necessarily implied an unequal transfer of values.

4. The value of a manufactured article was determined by the value of the raw material from which it was made plus the value of the food consumed during the process of manufacture.

5. Governmental regulations of and restraints on economic activities violated the free functioning of the natural order.

6. Free trade was the best policy for the promotion of domestic and international commerce.

7. An *impôt unique* on the net product of land was theoretically the best form of taxation. All indirect taxes, on last analysis, would fall on the land.

8. Wealth comprised a surplus of material objects, chiefly products of the land.

Franklin's ready acceptance of Physiocracy was due to his desire to completely master all effective arguments inimical to Mercantilism. As a member of the Physiocratic school he became a co-worker with the *économistes* in disseminating antithetical economic doctrines, and his numerous writings did much to bring Mercantilism into disrepute. The universal

applicability of Physiocratic doctrines, transcending national boundaries and barriers, strongly appealed to his broad humanitarian and cosmopolitan spirit. Physiocratic agrarianism also seemed to him to be particularly suitable to the agricultural economy of eighteenth century America.

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Chapter VIII

FRANKLIN'S SERVICES AND INTEREST IN THE PROMOTION OF AGRICULTURE, SILK CULTURE AND BOTANY

As early as 1728 when Franklin wrote *A Modest Enquiry into the Nature and Necessity of a Paper Currency* he had accepted Sir William Petty's theory that land and labor were the chief factors of production. The validity of this theory probably appeared self-evident to him because in colonial America agriculture was the predominant industry. On his second visit to England (1757-1762) he had an opportunity to observe the wretched condition of the English factory laborers and came to the conclusion that the factory system was a social evil. He then realized that the American farmers, who owned their own farms, were infinitely better off than the workers in English factories. While he was in England in 1760 he wrote: "Manufactures are founded in poverty. It is the multitude of poor without land in a country, and who must work for others at low wages or starve, that enables undertakers to carry on a manufacture. . . . But no man who can have a piece of land of his own, sufficient by his labour to subsist his family in plenty, is poor enough to be a manufacturer, and work for a master. Hence while there is land enough in *America* for our people, there can

never be manufactures to any amount of value." [1] He realized, however, that manufactured goods were necessary and believed that the evils of the factory system might be eliminated by manufacture in the home. In 1773 he wrote, "Farmers who manufacture in their own Families what they have occasion for and no more, are perhaps the happiest People and the healthiest." [2]

After 1767 Franklin virtually became a member of the Physiocratic school of French economic thought which held that land was the sole source of wealth and that agricultural labor was the only kind of labor which was productive of new wealth. He was long associated with many of the leading Physiocratic thinkers and was thoroughly in accord with most of their doctrines. He was engaged with them in the dissemination of the theories of a system of economic thought which were inimical and antithetical to Mercantilism. The Mercantilists in general believed that national wealth was to be obtained in foreign commerce with a favorable balance of trade; the Physiocrats, on the other hand, characterized commercial pursuits as essentially unproductive and emphasized the fact that agriculture was the real source of new wealth.

The American colonists in the eighteenth century had hardly begun to exploit the country's abundant fertile lands and its vast stretches of primeval forests. The restraints on colonial manufacture under the British Mercantilist system prohibited the making

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 49.
[2] Ibid., VI, 139. Letter to Dr. Thomas Percival of Manchester. September 25, 1773.

of finished articles for exportation; but these restraints were not generally burdensome to the colonists because they could obtain most manufactured goods from England more cheaply than they could make them. Even though the British government had permitted manufacture it would not have been the leading colonial industry because the colonists would naturally have been attracted to agriculture and to the other extractive industries in which rewards were more quickly and easily obtainable. Franklin knew that America was essentially a raw-material-producing country and believed that its future greatness and economic prosperity depended on the production of agricultural products and on the promotion of foreign commerce in raw materials.

In 1747 when Franklin thought of retiring from active business life as printer and publisher at Philadelphia he had accumulated a considerable fortune. He had lived in the cities of Boston and Philadelphia nearly all his life, and it was quite natural when he planned to retire from business that he should have contemplated the charms and attractions of rural life and of agricultural pursuits. At the age of forty-three he had apparently decided to spend the remainder of his life in the pursuit of his hobbies, farming and the study of electricity. Sometime in 1749 he wrote as follows to Jared Eliot,[1] "About

[1] Jared Eliot (1685-1763) was a minister at Killingworth, Conn. He was a graduate of Yale College and the author of *An Essay upon Field Husbandry in New England, as it is or may be ordered* (New London, 1748). A continuation of this essay appeared in 1749. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of London in 1756 or 1757.

eighteen months ago, I made a Purchase of about three hundred Acres of Land near Burlington, and resolved to improve it in the best and Speediest manner, that I might be Enabled to indulge myself in that kind of life, which was most agreeable. My fortune, (thank God,) is such that I can enjoy all the necessaries and many Indulgencies of Life; but I think that in Duty to my children I ought so to manage, that the profits of my Farm may Ballance the loss my Income will Suffer by my retreat to it." [1]

From Franklin's correspondence with Eliot it appears that he devoted his farm to raising oats and rye and the following grasses: red clover, timothy, Salem grass, rye-grass and blue bent. He probably sold his grain at Philadelphia, which was the leading cattle-fattening, slaughtering and packing centre in the American colonies.

Franklin's electrical experiments and particularly his proof, by the famous kite experiment (June, 1752), that lightning and frictional electricity were identical, gave him an international reputation as a scientist. In recognition of his discoveries the Royal Society of London elected him a Fellow in 1756. During the same year he was also chosen a member of the London Society of Arts (founded 1753). From 1757 until 1762 and from 1764 until 1775 he resided in England, acting in the capacity of a colonial agent, and became an active member of these societies.

[1] Franklin (Smyth), II, 383-384. The writer has not been able to determine the exact location of Franklin's farm. Dr. Carl R. Woodward of Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, has made an extensive search of the records of real estate transfers at Mount Holly, New Jersey, but failed to find any record of the location or of the transfer of this farm.

During his long residence in England he became acquainted with nearly all of the leading natural scientists and agriculturists. He aided these men in securing American plants by forwarding their orders to American botanists and plant collectors like John Bartram,[1] and the latter's cousin, Humphry Marshall.[2] The English botanists, agriculturists, herbalists and horticulturists soon began to exchange plants and seeds with the American botanists and plant collectors, and introduced the latter to their continental friends.

Franklin introduced John Bartram to M. Dalibard,[3] the French botanist who exchanged seeds with Bartram. He also introduced the latter to Dr. Gronovius,[4] the Dutch physician and botanist, who presented Bartram with Linnæus' *Systema Naturae* of 1740. He procured for Bartram the position as collector of useful American trees, shrubs, seeds and plants for the Public Botanical Garden, established

[1] John Bartram (1699-1777), sometimes called "the father of American botany" and styled by Linnæus "the greatest natural botanist in the world." He was one of the founders of the American Philosophical Society and established the first botanical garden in America at Kingsessing on the Schuylkill river which is now part of the park system of Philadelphia. He and his cousin, Humphry Marshall, were Quakers.

[2] Humphry Marshall (1722-1801), botanist and plant collector who lived at West Bradford, Pennsylvania. In 1785 he published and dedicated to Franklin the first strictly American botanical work, *Arbustrum Americanum, or an Alphabetical Catalogue of Forest Trees and Shrubs, natives of the American United States.* He named a genus of the Tea family (*Theaceae*), *Franklinia*, and the only species of this genus, *Franklinia Altamaha*, in honor of Franklin. The *Franklinia Altamaha* is a small ornamental tree or shrub which is grown in parks and yards. It was first discovered in 1765 by the Bartrams near Fort Barrington on the Altamaha river in Georgia and was later cultivated in the celebrated garden of the Bartrams at Philadelphia.

[3] Dalibard was the author of the botanical work, *Florae Parisiensis Prodromus* (Paris, 1749). Bartram gave this copy to the Library Company of Philadelphia.

[4] John Frederic Gronovius (1690-1762), was a friend of Linnæus.

at Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1764. In that year Bartram wrote to Dr. John Hope,[1] one of the founders of the Garden, stating that he had sent him "150 specimens" and "nearly 150 species of curious seeds" for the botanical garden. Bartram also added that, at Franklin's request, he was soon going to send a box containing over one hundred different kinds of American trees and shrubs.[2]

Another of Franklin's important services for the promotion of botanical study—and incidentally for agricultural science in England and America—was to assist Peter Collinson [3] to obtain the appointment of John Bartram to the position of King's Botanist in 1765.[4] The latter sent many new botanical specimens, such as seeds, plants, grasses, shrubs and trees, to England, and received from that country many plant species that were new and useful to America.

Franklin personally introduced a number of new and useful plant species into several of the American colonies. He is said to have been responsible for the introduction of the yellow willow (*Salix aurea*) into Pennsylvania having made cuttings from a basket which had been thrown into a creek at Philadelphia.

[1] Dr. John Hope (d. 1786) was professor of Botany at Edinburgh. He did much to promote the cultivation of rhubarb in Scotland.

[2] See Bartram's letter to Dr. John Hope, October 4, 1764. William Darlington, *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall*, pp. 433-434. In 1772 the Society of Scotch Gentlemen which established the Public Botanical Garden at Edinburgh awarded Bartram a gold medal for his services.

[3] Peter Collinson (1693-4–1768), an intimate friend of Franklin, was a member of the Royal Society and of the Society of Arts at London. He was a correspondent of Linnæus, and maintained a botanical garden at Mill Hill, London.

[4] See letters of Bartram and Collinson to each other in William Darlington's *Memorials of John Bartram and Humphry Marshall*, pp. 266, 271-273.

He is also given the credit for having been the first to introduce the culture of broom corn into Pennsylvania.[1] In a letter to his father and mother, September, 1744, he promised to procure from John Bartram a medicinal herb they desired, and stated that he had twice sent Chinese ginseng (probably the dried roots and not living plants) from the latter to persons in Boston who desired it.[2] He obtained Rhenish grape plants or slips in Pennsylvania and sent them to Edmund Quincy of Boston.[3] He sent "Barbary Barley" which he procured from Peter Collinson in England to Jared Eliot in Connecticut and to Cadwallader Colden in New York; and "whisk seed" [4] from Virginia to his sister, Mrs. Jane Mecom of Boston, telling her to distribute it among several of his friends there. He was the first to introduce Chinese rhubarb into America (1770) having procured the seed from a Mr. Inglish who received a medal from the Society of Arts at London for raising it.[5]

In 1768 he sent "Swiss Barley 6 Rows to one Ear" and "naked oats" to his wife for his Pennsylvania friends, Roberts, Rhodes, Thomson and Bartram, and for his son, William, who was then Governor of New

[1] J. F. Watson, *Annals of Philadelphia*, II, 487.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), II, 282. John Bartram found ginseng in America, probably in Pennsylvania, as early as 1738 or 1739. See P. Collinson's letter to Bartram, February 24, 1738-9. Darlington, op. cit., pp. 127-128.

[3] *The Life and Works of John Adams*, II, 81-82.

[4] Broom corn.

[5] See Franklin's letters to John Bartram, London, January 11, 1770, and February 10, 1773, Darlington, op. cit., pp. 404-405. He also sent to America Chinese rhubarb seed which he obtained from Scotland in 1772. See Franklin (Smyth), V, 432, 443. Peter Collinson sent John Bartram "Siberian rhubarb" and probably also "Rhapontic rhubarb," the common garden rhubarb, as early as 1739. See Collinson's letter to Bartram, September 2, 1739. Darlington, op. cit., p. 134.

Jersey and who owned a farm near Burlington.[1] He also sent to America from England "Chinese Caravances,"[2] a species of European juniper,[3] "upland rice"[4] obtained from Cochin China, seeds of the "Chinese tallow tree,"[5] several varieties of beans, the "Scotch Cabbage,"[6] the Cabbage Turnip,[7] and several varieties of peas, including "Penshurst Peas."[8] He first introduced the kohlrabi into this country having obtained seeds of it from a Mr. Tromond of Milan with whom he was acquainted at London.[9]

Franklin introduced "Fowl Meadow Grass,"[10] an American marsh perennial, into England where it was successfully grown by Peter Collinson in his botanical garden at Mill Hill, London. He first introduced

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 184, 192. See also Anthony Todd's letter to Franklin, October 31, 1765. *Calendar Franklin Papers,* I, 88; Franklin's letter to Humphry Marshall, April 22, 1771. Franklin (Smyth), V, 317.

[2] "Caravances" or "Garavances" were words then used to denote a variety of leguminous plants—lentils, peas and beans. Franklin (Smyth), V, 245.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), V, 432.

[4] Probably *Oryzopsis,* commonly called upland rice, of which there are about twenty-four species in temperate climates. Three species are indigenous to the United States.

[5] Franklin (Smyth), V, 443. The "Chinese tallow tree" (*sapium sebiferum*).

[6] Ibid., VI, 8. The "Scotch cabbage" (*brassica Siberica*), was Scotch kale or Siberian borecole.

[7] Ibid., VI, 8. What Franklin called "Cabbage Turnip" was undoubtedly the "turnip-rooted Cabbage" described in Philip Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary* (London, 1763). This vegetable was formerly much grown in England but was then not very well liked because of its strong flavor. It was used by some for soups and also as stock food.

[8] See Franklin's letter to David Colden, March 5, 1773. *New York Hist. Soc. Coll. Colden Papers,* 1923, VII, 186. These peas derived their name from the town in the vicinity of which they were grown, Penshurst, Kent, England.

[9] See Franklin's letter to Philip Mazzei, Philadelphia, circa 1776 or 1777, Franklin (Smyth), VI, 456. Franklin called the kohlrabi "ravizzoni" or "*cavolo rapa.*" The coarser varieties of kohlrabi (*oleracea var. caulo-rapa*) have been used as stock food in this country for over a century.

[10] "Fowl Meadow Grass" (*panicularia nervata*), a species of *Glyceria.* It was also called "Duck Grass" in colonial Pennsylvania. See *Pennsylvania Chronicle,* September 4-11, 1769, III, 275.

"Newtown Pippin" [1] apples into England in 1759. These excellent American apples immediately attracted much attention there. Peter Collinson obtained grafts from John Bartram and they were soon successfully cultivated and are to-day widely grown throughout England and Ireland. Considerable quantities of these apples were probably included in the large shipments of American apples to England in 1772 or 1773.[2]

In Franklin's letters and in those of his foreign correspondents may be found acknowledgements of the receipt of European seeds and plants as well as statements noting the shipment of American species to Europe. In 1763 Alexander Small of England sent Franklin, who was then in America, six pounds of burnet seed, and promised to send him some seeds of an excellent variety of cabbage grown in Anjou, France.[3] In 1778 D. E. Reine sent him some fine rice seed obtained from the Cape of Good Hope and the coast of Malabar.[4]

While he was in France he had Newtown Pippin scions, hickory nuts, walnuts and chestnuts sent to him from America.[5] He procured seeds and plants

[1] There were two varieties of Newtown Pippins, the green and the yellow. It is impossible to tell whether both of these varieties were then introduced into England. Pomologists believe that the Yellow Newtown is the same as the apple now called the Albemarle Pippin and that the Green Newtown is identical with what is now called the Brook Pippin. See S. A. Beach, N. O. Booth, O. M. Taylor, *The Apples of New York* (Albany, 1905), I, 147-148.

[2] See letter of Michael Collinson to John Bartram, February 25, 1773, Darlington, op. cit., 454-455.

[3] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 26.

[4] Ibid., I, 409.

[5] See Franklin's letter to Richard Bache, Passy, September 13, 1781, Franklin (Smyth), VIII, 314; also a letter to his son-in-law (Richard Bache) and daughter, Passy, July 27, 1783. Mason Library No. 524.

from America for his French friends, Le Veillard,[1] Malesherbes the agriculturist,[2] the Archbishop of Bordeaux,[3] and for Buffon, the great naturalist who was associated with the celebrated *Jardin des Plantes* at Paris.[4]

Franklin printed several books which dealt with agriculture and botany. In 1751 he printed Dr. Thomas Short's *Medicina Britannica* with the subtitle, *A Treatise of Such Physical Plants As Are Generally to be found in the Fields or Gardens in Great Britain.* Short's book itself, "a kind of materia medica reduced to popular apprehension," possesses little merit; but its preface, appendix and notes, written by John Bartram, are valuable contributions to the development of botanical and agricultural science in America. Bartram's notes indicated where various medicinal plants might be found in America, their various names, and how they differed from quite similar plants of Europe. His Appendix contains a description of a number of plants peculiar to America, their uses, etc., and notices twenty or more vegetables indigenous to America. In 1753 Franklin directed James Parker, with whom he was associated in the printing business at New York, to print an Essay on Agriculture which was written by Jared

[1] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 154.

[2] See Franklin's letter to Luzerne, Passy, March 5, 1780. Franklin (Smyth), VIII, 29-31. In 1780 Malesherbes sent Franklin three packages of seeds not known in America. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, IV, 42.

[3] See Franklin's letter to Abbé de la Roche, Philadelphia, April, 1786. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 503.

[4] Franklin (Smyth), I, 84.

Eliot.[1] He seems to have translated into French and to have printed on his press at Passy, France, William Bartram's [2] Catalogue of American trees and shrubs which served to guide French botanists and agriculturists in their collection of American species unknown in France.[3]

Another of Franklin's important services in the promotion of agricultural and botanical science was his distribution of works on these subjects both in America and Europe. In 1755 he sent Jared Eliot letters of John Bartram [4] consisting of "at least twenty folio pages, large Paper well fill'd, on the Subjects of Botany, Fossils, Husbandry, and the first Creation"; also a manuscript of Francis Alison, Vice Provost of the College and Academy of Philadelphia, on agriculture, philosophy and other subjects of learning [5] He also seems to have distributed copies of Eliot's Essays on Agriculture among his friends in Great Britain.[6] He directed his wife in 1757 to de-

[1] See Franklin's letter to Eliot, Philadelphia, May 3, 1753. Franklin (Smyth), III, 128. James Parker and W. Weyman printed Eliot's *A Continuation of An Essay upon Field-Husbandry, as it is or may be ordered in New-England,* Part IV (New York, 1753), and in 1755 they printed Part V under the same title. His *Sixth Essay on Field-Husbandry, as it is, or may be, ordered in New-England* was published by J. Parker and Company (New Haven, 1759), and his *Six essays upon field-husbandry in New-England in the year 1747* with an *Appendix* seem to have been printed by J. Parker and Company at New York in 1761.

[2] William Bartram (1737-1823) was the fifth son of John Bartram.

[3] See Abbé Nolin's letter to Franklin, Paris, April 18, 1784. *Calendar Franklin Papers,* III, 184; also Luther S. Livingston, *Franklin and his Press at Passy,* pp. 192-194.

[4] Franklin introduced John Bartram to Jared Eliot in 1751. See Franklin's letter to Eliot, Philadelphia, December 24, 1751. Franklin (Smyth), III, 60-61.

[5] Franklin (Smyth), III, 281.

[6] See Franklin's letter to Sir Alexander Dick, December 19, 1763. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 211.

liver Philip Miller's[1] *Gardener's Dictionary* and a "Quarto Pamphlet . . . call'd a Treatise of Cyder-making"[2] to James Parker, with whom he was associated in the printing business at New York.[3] In 1757 while he was in England he purchased many books on agriculture and gardening for Charles Norris of Pennsylvania,[4] and in 1759 bought a large book on husbandry[5] for his friend, Joseph Galloway, also of Pennsylvania. In 1778 M. Mesny sent him from Paris a hundred copies of a work by M. de la Faye on the Roman method of preparing lime, begging Franklin to add his recommendation and to send them to America.[6] In 1785 the Marquis de Ponçins sent Franklin his book on agriculture which the latter probably sent to the Library Company of Philadelphia as the author had requested.[7] M. Collignon, in the same year, sent him from Lorraine a copy of his book on the clearing of waste lands and desired other copies forwarded to the United States.[8] Franklin sent four copies of Humphry Marshall's *Arbustrum Americanum*[9] from America to his French friends, Le Veil-

[1] Philip Miller (1694-1771) was a celebrated English gardener, botanist and authority on agriculture. The first edition of his *Gardener's Dictionary*, the first work of its kind in English, was published in London, 1731.

[2] Probably *The most easie Method of Making the best Cyder* by J. W. [i.e., John Worlidge] Gent. London, 1687, 4°.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), III, 396.

[4] Franklin's account book shows that he expended £18 5s. in these purchases.

[5] This book was probably Du Hamel du Monceau's *A Practical Treatise of Husbandry* (London, 1759), which was translated from the French and dedicated to the members of the London Society of Arts to which Franklin belonged.

[6] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 427.

[7] Ibid., III, 244.

[8] Ibid., IV, 473.

[9] *Arbustrum Americanum; The American Grove, or, an Alphabetical Catalogue of Forest Trees and Shrubs, Natives of the American United States* (Philadelphia, 1785). This work, as previously noted, was dedicated to Franklin.

lard, Rochefoucauld, Malesherbes and Barbançon.[1]

The fact that Franklin was the recipient of many gifts of books on agriculture and botany shows that the donors of them recognized his interest in the promotion of agricultural and botanical science. Jared Eliot sent him his twelve Essays on Agriculture in 1751, and in the same year Peter Collinson forwarded two works on agriculture to him from England; one, Robert Maxwell's "Select Transactions in Husbandry" [2] and, the other, a manuscript, written by an Englishman named Jackson, containing an account of agricultural experiments the latter had made on sandy soils in Norfolkshire, England.[3] In 1763 John Mills of England sent to Franklin, who was then in America, the first volume of his Husbandry and in 1764 the fourth volume.[4] While he was in France he subscribed for Jacquin's *Hortus botanicus Vindobonensis.*[5] J. M. Ortlieb in 1783, sent him from Reichenweyr, Upper Alsace, a French essay on the cultivation

[1] See letter from Le Veillard to Franklin, Passy, October 22, 1786. *Calendar Franklin Papers,* IV, 156.

[2] *The Practical Husbandman; being a Collection of Miscellaneous Papers on Husbandry* (Edinburgh, 1757).

[3] Collinson requested Franklin to submit this work to John Bartram and Eliot. Franklin loaned it and Maxwell's book to the latter, who apparently prepared a part of Jackson's manuscript to be printed in 1753. See Collinson's letter to Bartram, September 20, 1751, Darlington, op. cit., p. 187; also Franklin's letters to Eliot, December 10, 1751, December 24, 1751, and May 3, 1753. Franklin (Smyth), III, 58-60, 60-61, 128.

[4] *A New and Complete System of Practical Husbandry; with a Comparative View of the Old Method* (5 Vols., London, 1762). Franklin apparently received four volumes of this work. See letters from Mills, March 2, 1763, and July 12, 1764. *Calendar Franklin Papers,* I, 24, 30. Mills requested Franklin to give the first volume to Eliot.

[5] Nikolaus Joseph Jacquin (1727-1817), the famous Austrian botanist and chemist, published his great work, *Hortus botanicus Vindobonensis,* in three volumes (Vienna, 1770-1776). Franklin probably bequeathed this work to his godson, William Hewson. See Franklin (Smyth), X, 508.

of grapes which was addressed to Joly de Fleury, and also discussed this subject in a letter to Franklin.[1] In the same year Jean André Mongez presented him with the third volume of a dictionary of Agriculture,[2] and in the fall of 1789 Franklin wrote to M. Le Veillard acknowledging the receipt of Abbé Rozier's "Dictionnaire d'Agriculture."

As early as 1760 Franklin asserted that the interior of America was suitable for the production of silk [3] and recognized the significance of the study of economic entomology and the economic value of the industry of silk culture. Since Parliament in 1768 had passed an act offering bounties for the production of silk in America he felt that Pennsylvanians should seriously concern themselves with its culture. At this time he had accepted the economic doctrines of the Physiocrats and had come to believe that land and its products constituted the real wealth of a country. In his opinion the use of land most beneficial to man was that use which would permit the production of the maximum amount of food for human consumption.

[1] *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 21. Jean Michel Ortlieb published his *Plan et Instruction pour l'Amélioration et l'Augmentation des Biens de la Terre, et spécialement des vignobles*, at Strasbourg some years later (1789).

[2] Ibid., III, 150. Abbé Jean André Mongez was the author of a large part of the first volumes of Abbé Rozier's *Cours complet d'Agriculture, théorique, pratique, économique, et de medicine rurale et veterinaire, ou Dictionnaire universel d'Agriculture; suivi d'une Méthode pour étudier l'Agriculture par principes. Par une société d'agriculteurs, et rédigé par l'abbé Rozier* (10 vols., Paris, 1781-1800). Volumes XI and XII of this work were published at Paris in 1805.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), IV, 59. James Logan recommended silk culture in Pennsylvania in 1725 and small quantities were produced there as early as 1729. See Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia*, II, 436. Gov. Patrick Gordon of Pennsylvania in a letter to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations, October 31, 1734, also suggested the possibility of the extensive culture of silk in that colony. See *Pennsylvania Archives* (Fourth Series), I, 545.

With these ideas in mind he wrote as follows to Dr. Cadwalader Evans of Philadelphia, from London, September 7, 1769:

"By a ship just sailed from hence (the captain a stranger, whose name I have forgotten,) I send you a late French treatise on the management of silkworms. It is said to be the best hitherto published, being written in the silk country by a gentleman well acquainted with the whole affair. It seems to me to be, like many other French writings, rather too much drawn out in words; but some extracts from it, of the principal directions, might be of use, if you would translate and publish them. I think the bounty is offered for silk from all the colonies in general. I will send you the act. But I believe it must be wound from the cocoons, and sent over in skeins. The cocoons would spoil on the passage, by the dead worm corrupting and staining the silk. A public filature should be set up for winding them there; or every family should learn to wind their own. In Italy they are all brought to market, from the neighbouring country, and bought up by those that keep the filatures. In Sicily each family winds its own silk, for the sake of having the remains to card and spin for family use. If some provision were made by the Assembly for promoting the growth of mulberry trees in all parts of the province, the culture of silk might afterwards follow easily. For the great discouragement to breeding worms at first is the difficulty of getting leaves and the being obliged to go far for them.

"There is no doubt with me but that it might succeed in our country. It is the happiest of all inventions for clothing. Wool uses a good deal of land to produce it, which, if employed in raising corn, would afford much more subsistence for man, than the mutton amounts to. Flax and hemp require good land, impoverish it, and at the same time permit it to produce no food at all. But mulberry trees may be planted in hedgerows on walks or avenues, or for shade near a house, where nothing else is wanted to grow. The food for the worms, which produce the silk, is in the air, and the ground under the trees may still produce grass, or some other vegetable good for man or beast. Then the wear of silk garments continues so much longer, from the strength of the materials, as to give it greatly the preference. Hence it is that the most populous of all countries, China, clothes its inhabitants with silk, while it feeds them plentifully, and has besides a vast quantity both raw and manufactured materials to spare for exportation. Raw silk here, in skeins well wound, sells from twenty to twenty-five shillings per pound; but, if badly wound, is not worth five shillings. Well wound is, when the threads are made to cross each other every way in the skein, and only touch where they cross. Badly wound is, when they are laid parallel to each other; for so they are glued together, break in unwinding them, and take a vast deal of time more than the other, by losing the end every time the thread breaks." [1]

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 227-229.

This extract of Franklin's letter to Dr. Evans was submitted to the American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia (of which Franklin was the President) on January 5, 1770. On February 2, Thomas Bond and Samuel Rhoads, on behalf of the Society, annexed this extract of Franklin's letter to a petition which was submitted to the Pennsylvania Assembly, February 6, 1770. The petition requested financial assistance for the establishment of a public filature at Philadelphia and for the promotion of silk culture.[1] The Assembly, however, failed to respond to the petition so the American Philosophical Society itself resolved to start a subscription to promote the culture of silk. Dr. Cadwalader Evans, Israel Pemberton, Benjamin Morgan, Moses Bartram, Dr. Francis Alison, Dr. William Smith, John Rhea, Samuel Rhoads, Thomas Fisher, Owen Biddle, Henry Drinker and Robert Strettell Jones were chosen managers and Edward Pennington the treasurer of the society for the promotion of silk culture which came to be called "the Filature." Three hundred and forty-seven persons, most of them prominent Philadelphians, within the period of a few days, contributed eight hundred eighty seven pounds and four shillings to the venture.

The "late French treatise on the management of silkworms" which Franklin sent to Dr. Evans was Sauvages de la Croix's (Abbé Pierre-Augustin Boissier) *Mémoires* (1763) consisting of three treatises viz. *Sur l'éducation des vers à soie, De la culture des*

[1] *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania*, VI, 216-217.

mûriers and Observations sur l'origine du miel. J. Odell of Burlington, New Jersey, a member of the American Philosophical Society, made a digest of these French treatises relating to the culture of silk which was published by the managers of "the Filature" in the form of a pamphlet entitled, *Directions for the Breeding and Management of Silk-Worms* (1770). For the purpose of elucidating this pamphlet four of the managers added to it an Appendix consisting of extracts from Samuel Pullein's *Essay on the Culture of Silk* (1758).[1]

The bounties offered by the British government under an act of Parliament (1768)[2] and the premiums granted by "the Filature" soon stimulated silk-raising in Pennsylvania. This greatly pleased Franklin, and on August 27, 1770, he wrote Evans that if nobody who understood reeling could be found in Georgia that he might procure "such a hand from Italy, a great silk merchant here having offered me his assistance for that purpose, if wanted."[3]

In 1771 Evans had sent Franklin some samples of Pennsylvanian silk which the latter showed to Thomas Walpole, a rich London merchant, who gave him more information about silk culture which Franklin

[1] Evans in a letter to Franklin, Philadelphia, November 27, 1769, (*Calendar Franklin Papers,* I, 102) acknowledged the receipt of "four French memoirs on the Education of Silk Worms and the Culture of Mulberry Trees." He undoubtedly alluded to the *Mémoires* cited above. These *Mémoires,* however, consist of only three treatises, one of which (the third) deals with the subject of honey.

[2] 9 Georgii III cap. XXXVIII (1768) entitled, An Act for further encouraging the Growth and Culture of Raw Silk in His Majesty's Colonies or Plantations in America. See *Anno Regni Georgii III. Regis . . . Nono* (London, 1769), pp. 1023-1028.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), V, 271.

at once sent to America.[1] In 1771 Franklin met in England a Mr. Patterson who was an authority on silk and its culture. He sent Evans a paper on silk culture which Patterson had given to him and such additional information as he had obtained from conversations with the latter; also a skein of Italian silk as a model for Pennsylvanians to imitate.[2] Another letter to Evans, July 18, 1771, contains additional information on silk culture in China. He also made the acquaintance of Dr. Samuel Pullein, an authority on this subject, and offered to forward to the latter any letters Evans desired sent to him.[3]

In 1772 Franklin wrote his wife, "I receiv'd your young Neighbour Haddock's Silk, and carried it myself to her Relations, who live very well, keeping a Linnen-Draper's Shop in Bishop's-Gate Street. They have a Relation in Spitalfields that is a Manufacturer who I believe will do it well. I shall honour much every young Lady that I find on my Return Dress'd in Silk of their own raising." [4]

"The Filature" in 1772 [5] sent Franklin some trunks of silk to sell in England with instructions to give presents of certain amounts of it to the Queen and the ladies of the Pennsylvania Proprietaries' families, and also to obtain the bounty which the British govern-

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 304-305.
[2] Ibid., V, 331-332; 335-336.
[3] Ibid., V, 336 and note.
[4] Ibid., V, 373.
[5] Ezra Stiles thought that Franklin received nearly 200 lbs. of ruled silk at London in 1771. *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, I, 361. The first shipment he received in 1772 amounted to 45 lbs. He was sent more in 1773 and 1774 for which he received at auction "nineteen shillings and sixpence the small pound." Franklin (Smyth), VI, 455-456; X, 277.

ment offered.[1] According to Franklin's statement, in 1772, "*above* 10,000 weight of cocoons was, in August 1771, sold at the public filature in Philadelphia." [2] Realizing that the British government was anxious to promote silk culture in the American colonies he stated that silk could be grown in the Ohio river valley in order to induce Parliament to grant him and his associates lands in this section of the country.[3]

In 1773 more silk cloth was produced at the Spitalfield's manufactory than there was sale for in Great Britain and many workmen of this plant were thrown out of work.[4] At this time one Joseph Clark, a Quaker, applied to Franklin to procure money to enable him and his family to go to America, but Franklin did not feel that he personally should contribute the money. Clark's friends finally raised by subscription a sum sufficient to pay for the passage to America and Franklin then recommended him "to the Notice and Encouragement of the Silk Committee, as far as they may find him deserving." "For tho'," he adds, "it may be most advantageous for our Country, while the Bounty continues so high, to send all our raw Silk hither, yet as the Bounty will gradually diminish and at length cease, I should think it not amiss to begin early the laying a Foundation for the

[1] Letter to Evans, February 6, 1772. Franklin (Smyth), V, 388-389.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), V, 505. According to Dr. Ezra Stiles (*Diary*, I, 361), premiums were paid for raising 387,778 cocoons of silk worms in Pennsylvania in 1772. He thought these "might make near 100lb ruled silk."

[3] Ibid., V, 503, 505.

[4] See Franklin's letter to James and Morgan, London, February 10, 1773. Franklin (Smyth), VI, 10-11.

future Manufacture of it; and perhaps this Person, if he finds Employment, may be a means of raising Hands for that purpose." [1]

Franklin was opposed to the English Corn Laws. In 1766 there was a poor grain crop in continental Europe. The crop in England, however, was good. British farmers naturally desired to export their grain to the continent where higher prices could be obtained than in England, but the Corn Laws forbade exportation of the grain. He felt that the Corn Laws were unjust and detrimental to the British agricultural class and wrote a clever satire, *On the Price of Corn, and the Management of the Poor* [2] which was printed in the *London Chronicle* (1766) and subsequently in the Physiocratic journal, *Ephémérides du Citoyen.*

He did much to acquaint the British with the value and uses of Indian [3] corn and advised British farmers on coming to America to raise it instead of wheat they were accustomed to grow in England. From his travels in Ireland, England and Scotland he was impressed with the poverty of the working classes. They were generally poorly clothed, housed and fed. Especially was this true of the laborers in the manufacturing and mining centres of England. The agricultural population of Great Britain was relatively

[1] Franklin (Smyth), VI, 27. The American Revolution put an end to the exportation of silk to England and practically ruined the industry in Pennsylvania.

[2] Ibid., V, 534-539. This article signed "Arator" appeared in the *London Chronicle*, November 27-29, 1766, XX, 524.

[3] For reference to Indian corn in Franklin's writings see Franklin (Smyth), II, 384; IV, 395-396; IX, 307, and Observations on Mayz, or Indian Corn, Franklin (Smyth), V, 553-555.

poorer than that of America, and Franklin believed that if English farmers would raise corn instead of other grains a cheaper food supply might be available and the condition of the English laboring classes might consequently be much improved.[1]

The range of Franklin's interest in agriculture may be shown by citing some of the topics related to the subject which at one time or another received his attention. His opinion on the possibility of growing coffee in England was sought by Dr. Fothergill and a Mr. Ellis.[2] Barbeu Dubourg, a follower of the Physiocratic school of economic thought, consulted him to obtain his opinion "on a machine for raising chickens from eggs without the aid of hens."[3] Jan Ingenhousz, physician at the royal court of Vienna, desired to know if he had read Abbé Felix Fontana's[4] work on a disease of wheat. In reply, Franklin displaying his interest wrote: "I shall be glad to see the work of Abbé Fontana on that disease of wheat."[5] He wrote to William Deane in 1773[6] describing a

[1] An excellent statement of Franklin's observations on the conditions of the working classes of Ireland, Scotland and England may be found in a letter to Dr. Joshua Babcock, London, January 13, 1772, in which he remarks, "For I assure you, that, in the Possession & Enjoyment of the various Comforts of Life, compar'd to these People every Indian is a Gentleman." Franklin (Smyth), V, 362-363.

[2] Letter from Ellis, Gray's Inn, London, December 8, 1773. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 154.

[3] Letter from Dubourg, Paris, November 25, 1773. *Calendar Franklin Papers*, I, 153.

[4] Abbé Felix Fontana (1730-1805), Italian philosopher and naturalist. He was professor of Natural Philosophy at the University of Pisa, and formed the Cabinet of Natural Science, at the request of Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany (later Emperor Leopold II of Austria).

[5] Franklin (Smyth), VI, 141. Ingenhousz in 1787 sent Franklin from Vienna three copies of the second edition of his *Expériences sur les Végétaux* (Paris, 1787), which showed that vegetables produced wholesome air.

[6] Ibid., VI, 40-41.

new method of making wagon wheels, the wooden fellies being of one piece with hoops of iron around them. He received from David Colden of New York in 1773 an account and description of the construction of a drill plow devised by the latter, and gave the description of its construction to Mr. Arbuthnot to lay before the London Society of Arts.[1] He was consulted and gave his opinion on a great variety of topics relating to agriculture: the best method and kind of machine to pull stumps of trees, how to secure fruits from frost,[2] how to make salt, the superiority of oxen over horses as beasts of burden, the courses taken by storms, the direction of winds, etc.

He recognized the economic significance of the study of entomology with reference to useful as well as to harmful insects.[3] He was also interested in the study of birds and recognized their economic importance as insect destroyers.[4]

He was probably the first American whose published writings called attention to the value of education in agricultural science. In his *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania* (1749) he wrote: "While they are reading Natural History, might not a little *Gardening, Planting, Grafting,*

[1] *New York Hist. Soc. Coll.* (1923), *Colden Papers*, VII, 185.

[2] Letter from Barbeu Dubourg (1722?), *Calendar Franklin Papers*, III, 486. Also Franklin (Smyth), I, 75-76. He advocated the blackening of fruit walls to increase the attraction of the sun's rays.

[3] See his letter to Mary Stevenson, June 11, 1760. Franklin (Smyth), IV, 20-22.

[4] See Peter Kalm, *Travels into North America* (London, 1772), I, 372-373. At Peter Collinson's request Franklin assisted Professor Kalm, the Swedish naturalist, botanist and pupil of Linnæus, in making preparations for his travels in America, 1748-1750. See Collinson's letter to Franklin, June 14, 1748. Darlington, op. cit., p. 368.

Inoculating, etc., be taught and practised; and now and then Excursions made to the neighbouring Plantations of the best Farmers, their Methods observ'd and reason'd upon for the Information of Youth? The Improvement of Agriculture being useful to all, and Skill in it no Disparagement to any." [1]

Franklin was probably also the first American to suggest insurance of crops against losses from storms, insect pests and plant diseases. In 1788 the crops over a large portion of France were destroyed by a severe storm. When he heard of this calamity he wrote to Le Veillard as follows: "It must have been a terrible tempest that devastated such an extent of country. I have sometimes thought that it might be well to establish an office of insurance for farms against the damage that may occur to them from storms, blight, insects, etc. A small sum paid by a number would repair such losses and prevent much poverty and distress." [2]

Another of Franklin's important contributions to agricultural science in America was his introduction there of the use of pulverized gypsum (then called plaster of Paris) as a fertilizer.[3] He probably became familiar with the fertilizing properties of gypsum during his residence in France and seems to have

[1] Franklin (Smyth), II, 395.

[2] Franklin to Le Veillard. Philadelphia, October 24, 1788. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 674. The crop failure of 1788 which was followed by the severe winter of 1789 caused terrible suffering. These were circumstances which played an important part in bringing about the French Revolution.

[3] Franklin (Smyth), I, 85; J. C. Loudon, *An Encyclopædia of Agriculture* (5th ed., London, 1844), 347. Loudon erroneously stated that Franklin advertised its fertilizing properties near the city of Washington, D. C., which did not exist in Franklin's lifetime.

recommended its use in America shortly after his return from France in 1785. Experiments to determine its effects as a plant manure were made in Pennsylvania, probably under the auspices of the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia,[1] about 1787.[2] Franklin is said to have used a unique method of demonstrating the value of gypsum as a plant food; he spread it on grass near a highway so as to make in large letters the words of the sentence, *This has been Plastered*. The grass where the gypsum was scattered soon grew more luxuriantly than the surrounding grass and assumed a green of a deeper shade.

On numerous occasions Franklin employed his talent as a writer to familiarize the British with the opportunities which America offered to farmers.[3] In 1760 when the Seven Years' War practically came to an end in America the Newcastle-Pitt Ministry was undecided whether to take from France the sugar-producing West Indian island of Guadeloupe or Canada. Public opinion in England was almost evenly divided as to the relative value of these French possessions. Franklin wrote by far the ablest pamphlet[4] which appeared in the "pamphlet war" which

[1] This was one of the first agricultural societies in America. It was founded in 1785. Franklin was a member.

[2] See George Washington's letter to Arthur Young, Mount Vernon, November 1, 1787. *The Writings of George Washington*, edited by Jared Sparks, XII, 292.

[3] Franklin aided Ralph Westley, who in 1774 went to Pennsylvania, to purchase a tract of land on which to settle some Norfolk farmers. He instructed his son-in-law, Richard Bache, to aid Westley in this project for he felt that the immigration of these progressive English farmers would be a valuable addition to the population of this country. See letter to Bache, September 10, 1774, Mason Library, No. 399.

[4] *The Interest of Great Britain Considered* (1760), Franklin (Smyth), IV, 32-82. The authorship of this pamphlet has often been disputed, but it is

was waged over this question and urged the government to keep Canada instead of Guadeloupe. He realized the immense advantages which the American West offered for farming and the variety of the products which could be raised there, and his pamphlet played no small part in influencing British public opinion and the ministry to keep the French possessions in continental North America.

When the American Revolution began and when it seemed likely that the British might capture all the seacoast towns Franklin wrote of the interior of America and the possibilities of the ultimate victory of the colonists: ". . . but the internal Country we shall defend. It is a good one and fruitful. It is with our Liberties, worth defending, and it will by itself by its Fertility enable us to defend it. Agriculture is the great Source of Wealth & Plenty. By cutting off our Trade you have thrown us *to the Earth* whence like *Antaeus* we shall rise yearly with fresh Strength and Vigour."[1]

In 1786 he wrote Jonathan Shipley, "My Son's Son, Temple Franklin, whom you have also seen, having had a fine farm of 600 Acres[2] convey'd to him by his Father when we were at Southampton,[3] has dropt'd

now a well-established fact that it was written by Franklin. See Article by Dr. I. Minis Hayes, *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 63, No. 1, 1924. An unpublished letter of William Franklin to Joseph Galloway, London, June 16, 1760, Mason Number 5174, proves conclusively that Franklin was the author.

[1] Letter to the Bishop of St. Asaph (Jonathan Shipley), Philadelphia, September 13, 1775. Original in the Mason Library.

[2] At Rancocas, New Jersey.

[3] Franklin stopped at Southampton, England, in 1785 on his return from France to America and there met his son, William, former Governor of New Jersey, who became a Loyalist when the Revolution began.

for the present his Views of acting in the political Line, and applies himself ardently to the Study and practice of Agriculture. This is much more agreable to me, who esteem it the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest of Employments." [1]

Franklin was a member of the following societies which were interested in the advancement of agricultural science: the Society for the Encouragement of Arts at London (1756),[2] the *Societa Patriotica diretta all' Avanzamento dell Agricoltura, delle Arti Manifatture di Milano* (1786)[3] and the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture (1785), one of the first agricultural societies in the United States.

Franklin's chief services and interests in the promotion of agriculture and botany may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. Through his offices John Bartram became American plant collector for the Public Botanical Garden at Edinburgh (1764) and King's Botanist in America (1765).

2. His introduction of Newtown Pippin apples into England (1759) led to the subsequent importation of scions and the cultivation of these apples in the British Isles.

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 490-491.

[2] The dates in parentheses indicate when he was admitted to membership.

[3] He was a corresponding member of this society. A list of societies, some of which were incidentally interested in agriculture, to which Franklin belonged, is given in Franklin (Smyth), X, 359-360. [It also may be of interest to observe that Franklin was the first president of the "Society for Political Inquiries" of Philadelphia (organized in 1787), the first society in the U. S. A. interested in promoting the study of political economy.]

3. He introduced grafts of these apples, also American nuts, trees and shrubs into France.

4. He printed, bought and distributed books on agriculture, gardening and botany.

5. He introduced the following useful plants into America from Europe: Scotch kale (*brassica Siberica*), the kohlrabi (*oleracea var. caulo rapa*), Chinese rhubarb and Swiss barley.

6. He was the first person to familiarize Americans with the fertilizing properties of pulverized gypsum which is now widely used as a fertilizer in the United States.

7. He played an active part in the promotion of silk culture in Pennsylvania, an industry, however, which eventually failed to succeed.

8. He was probably the first American to call attention in a published writing to the value of education in agricultural science and probably also the first to suggest the insurance of crops against storms, plant diseases and insect pests.

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Chapter IX

MISCELLANEA

Import Duties

THE best statement of Franklin's views on the advantages and disadvantages arising from import duties may be found in a letter to Jared Eliot, July 17, 1747, in which he comments on a tariff measure that had been passed by the Assembly of Connecticut:

"I wish your new Law may have the good Effect expected from it, in extricating your Government from the heavy Debt this War has obliged them to contract. I am too little acquainted with your particular Circumstances to judge of the Prudence of such a Law for your Colony with any Degree of Exactness. But to a Friend one may hazard one's Notions, right or wrong. And, as you are pleas'd to desire my Thoughts, you shall have 'em and welcome. I wish they were better.

"First, I imagine that the Five Per Cent Duty on Goods imported from your Neighbouring Governments, tho' paid at first Hand by the Importer, will not upon the whole come out of his Pocket, but be paid in Fact by the Consumer; for the Importer will be sure to sell his Goods as much dearer as to reimburse himself; so that it is only another Mode of Tax-

ing your own People, tho' perhaps meant to raise Money on your Neighbours. Yet, if you can make some of the Goods, heretofore imported, among yourselves, the advanc'd price of five per cent may encourage your own Manufacture, and in time make the Importation of such Articles unnecessary, which will be an Advantage.

"Secondly, I imagine the Law will be difficult to execute, and require many Officers to prevent Smuggling in so extended a Coast as yours; and the Charge considerable, and, if Smuggling is not prevented, the fair Trader will be undersold and ruined. If the Officers are many and busy, there will arise numbers of vexatious Lawsuits, and Dissensions among your People. *Quaere,* whether the Advantages will overballance.

"Thirdly, if there is any Part of your Produce that you can well spare, and would desire to have taken off by your Neighbours in Exchange for something you more want, perhaps they, taking offence at your selfish Law, may in Return lay such heavy Duties or Discouragements on that Article, as to leave it a Drug on your Hands. As to the duty on transporting Lumber (unless in Connecticut Bottoms to the West Indies), I suppose the Design is to raise the Price of such Lumber on your Neighbours, and throw that advanced price into your Treasury. But may not your Neighbours supply themselves elsewhere? Or, if Numbers of your People have Lumber to dispose of, and want Goods from, or have Debts to pay to your Neighbours, will they not (unless you employ Num-

bers of Officers to watch all your Creeks and Landings) run their Lumber, and so defeat the Law? Or, if the Law is strictly executed, and the Duty discourage the Transportation to your Neighbours, will not all your people, that want to dispose of Lumber, be laid at the Mercy of those few Merchants that send it to the West Indies, who will buy it at their own Price, and make such Pay for it as they think proper?" [1]

Export Duties

Franklin stated in a letter to his son, William, London, March 13, 1768, that duties placed on commodities which were exported to foreign countries operated as unjust "internal taxes" on the people of those countries:

"Only to you, I may say, that not only the Parliament of Britain, but every state in Europe, claims and exercises a right of laying duties on the exportation of its own commodities to foreign countries. A duty is paid here on coals exported to Holland, and yet England has no right to lay an internal tax on Holland. All goods brought out of France to England, or any other country, are charged with a small duty in France, which the consumers pay, and yet France has no right to tax other countries." [2]

[1] Franklin (Smyth), II, 313-314.
[2] Ibid., V, 115-116.

External and Internal Taxes

In his examination before the House of Commons (1766) relative to the repeal of the American Stamp Act Franklin made a distinction between "external" and "internal" parliamentary taxation. He defined "external taxes" as duties laid on goods which were imported into the American colonies and "internal taxes" as taxes which were imposed by England within the colonies. He regarded the former as unobjectionable because the colonists could avoid paying them by refraining from the purchase of goods on which they were levied. He maintained, however, that Parliament had no constitutional right to impose "internal taxes" in the American colonies because the colonists had no representation in that body and also because the payment of these taxes was unavoidable. Arguments against "internal taxes" such as Franklin's were widely used by Americans to justify their refusal to pay these taxes in the period immediately after 1765. The distinction between "internal" and "external" taxes also gained currency in England and was made by William Pitt in the famous speech before Parliament, January 14, 1766.

American historians generally have failed to discover the legal grounds which formed the basis for the denial of Parliament's right to impose "internal taxes" in the American colonies. Cognizant of the fact that the great legal scholars of England held that there were no constitutional restrictions on Parliament's right to levy any kind of taxation within the

British Empire—even in those parts of the Empire that were unrepresented in Parliament—students of American colonial history have felt that the colonies improvised far-fetched arguments to justify their refusal to pay "internal taxes" and to maintain the position which was succinctly stated in the defiant slogan, "Taxation without representation is tyranny." [1]

Franklin's intimate friend, Richard Jackson, the celebrated Irish barrister, was the first to set forth the legal arguments against internal taxes. He was colonial agent for Pennsylvania from 1762 until 1764, when Franklin was in America, and continued to act in that capacity after the latter's return to England in 1764.[2] In 1762 he was elected to Parliament from the conjoint borough of Weymouth and Melcombe Regis, England, and was one of the members who spoke against the Stamp Act, which he held imposed an unconstitutional "internal tax" on the American colonists. In a letter to Governor Thomas Fitch of Connecticut, February 9, 1765, he wrote as follows:

[1] It should be mentioned here that the American colonists generally did not object to the payment of "external taxes" and that they did not desire to be represented in the House of Commons. They did not, however, accept the English theory of "virtual representation," i.e., that each member of Parliament represented the interests of all the people in the British Empire.

[2] Jackson was born at Dublin, Ireland. In 1760 he was appointed colonial agent for Connecticut. He later became legal counsellor for the South Sea Company and for the University of Cambridge. From 1762 until 1784 he was a member of Parliament; in 1782 he was one of the Lords of the Treasury, and from 1770 until its dissolution he was chief legal adviser of the Board of Trade. Owing to his vast knowledge of the affairs of the British Empire he earned the sobriquet, "Omniscient Jackson." Franklin secured his official appointment as colonial agent for Pennsylvania, October 15, 1763. Evidence in some of Franklin's unpublished letters strongly indicates that he was the author of *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania* (London, 1759), a work which has frequently been attributed to Franklin.

"*Sir*

I write shortly now to acquaint you, that last Wednesday came on in the House of Commons, the great Question whether the American Colonies should be taxed by Parliament, by way of internal Duty; No Member insisted on an Exemption by Right, except that Mr Beckford touched that Point a little, but the Resolution was opposed and the debate lasted till 9 o'clock at which time the House divided 244 or 5 agst us, to only 49 for us, Mr Beckford Col. Barré Mr Fuller Sir Wm Meredith and myself spoke against Internal Dutys, I relied on the Statutes of the 34 & 35 H: 8.C. 13 and 25 Car; 2 C 9, for giving Members to the Counties & Citys of Chester & Durham, which at the same time they established the Right of taxing such part of the British Dominions as have no Election of Members, shew the sense of the Legislature, that the Right cannot be exercised without great Publick & Private Mischiefs and therefore sho^{d} not be, without giving the Right that is given by those Laws, I was but short at that time, but shall be somewhat longer when the Bill itself is brought into the House, that will be some time next week, I hope at least the Exercise of the Right will not be continued with so little Interruption as the Right itself has been declared." [1]

From this letter it appears that Jackson argued that the Statute of 34 and 35 Henry VIII Cap. 13 entitled, "An act for making of knights and burgesses within

[1] *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, XVIII, *Fitch Papers*, II, 316-317.

the county and city of Chester," established a precedent in English law that "internal taxes" could not be imposed by Parliament in those parts of the British Empire which were not represented in that body. The preamble of this act recites the complaint of the people of the county and city of Chester that they were not represented in Parliament although subject to its laws which had caused them to sustain great losses and burdens. The subject of taxation is not explicitly mentioned in the statute although it is plainly implied.[1]

In the same letter Jackson states that he relied upon another statute, 25 Caroli II Cap. 9 (1672) entitled, "An act to enable the county palatine of Durham to send knights and burgesses to serve in Parliament," which is more explicit and clear in its meaning than that of 34 and 35 Hen. VIII with reference to Chester. The preamble of this act recites that the county of Durham has had no representation in Parliament although it has been "liable to all payments, rates and subsidies granted by parliament, equally with the inhabitants of other counties" which have been represented in Parliament by knights and burgesses. The statute provides for the election of two knights from the county of Durham and two burgesses from the city of Durham.[2]

On final analysis the origin of the American Colonists' constitutional objections to "internal taxation," such as the Stamp Act imposed, may be traced to

[1] *The Statutes at Large* by Danby Pickering Esq., V, 150-151.
[2] Ibid., VIII, 402-403.

Richard Jackson's reliance on these old English statutes to prove the unconstitutionality of the American Stamp Act. Franklin and the other colonial agents accepted the distinction between "external" and "internal" taxes and disseminated Jackson's views regarding the unconstitutionality of "internal" parliamentary taxation in England as well as in America.[1]

Patents

Writing about the publication of a pamphlet in which he described his invention of the "Pennsylvania Fireplace" in 1742, Franklin thus stated his views on the granting of patents:

"Gov'r was so pleas'd with the construction of this stove, as described in it, that he offered to me a patent for the sole vending of them for a term of years; but I declin'd it from a principle which has ever weighed with me on such occasions, viz., That, as we enjoy great advantages from the inventions of others, we should be glad of an opportunity to serve others by any invention of ours; and this we should do freely and generously." [2]

[1] For further information on this subject see the following letters: Jared Ingersoll to Thomas Fitch, February 11, 1765; Richard Jackson to Thomas Fitch, June 5, 1765; Colony of Connecticut to Richard Jackson; Richard Jackson to Thomas Fitch, November 9, 1765. *Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society*, XVIII. *Fitch Papers*, II, 320-321, 350-351, 366-369.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), I, 370.

Social Theory of Private Property

Franklin was the first American writer to define what is called the social theory of private property.[1] He expounded this theory in several of his writings,[2] his first statement of it appearing in a letter to Robert Morris, Passy, December 25, 1783:

"All Property, indeed, except the Savage's temporary Cabin, his Bow, his Matchcoat, and other little Acquisitions, absolutely necessary for his Subsistence, seems to me to be the Creature of public Convention. Hence the Public has the Right of Regulating Descents, and all other Conveyances of Property, and even of limiting the Quantity and the Uses of it. All Property that is necessary to a Man, for the Conservation of the Individual and the Propagation of the Species, is his natural Right, which none can justly deprive him of: But all Property superfluous to such purposes is the Property of the Publick, who, by their Laws, have created it, and who may therefore by other Laws dispose of it, whenever the Welfare of the Publick shall demand such Disposition." [3]

Attention is called to the fact that Franklin's first written statement of the social theory of private

[1] The historical development and modern application of this theory is admirably set forth by Professor Richard T. Ely in his *Property and Contract in their Relations to the Distribution of Wealth*, in which (Vol. I, p. 186) he quotes a passage from Franklin's *Queries and Remarks Respecting Alterations in the Constitution of Pennsylvania*, 1789, Franklin (Smyth), X, 59, in tracing the development of the theory.

[2] See Franklin (Smyth), IX, 138, 293; X, 59.

[3] Ibid., IX, 138.

property was made during his residence in France,[1] where Rousseau and other French writers had enunciated the social contract theory to explain the origin of civil society. The explanation of the origin of civil society by a social compact or contract, a theory as old if not older than Plato, was one of the commonplaces of political thought in the eighteenth century.[2] Franklin modified this theory and used it to explain the origin and the true nature of private property. He undoubtedly became familiar with the views expressed by Rousseau in his *Contrat Social* (1762) while he resided in France, and it is not improbable that he was also familiar with the Mayflower Compact, November 11, 1620, in which the social compact theory was actually embodied.

The Representation of Property Interests

In his *Queries and Remarks Respecting Alterations in the Constitution of Pennsylvania* (1789) Franklin stated that the Upper House of the state legislature should be elected by the property-owning class:

"Hence it is that the two branches should be elected by Persons differently qualified; and in short, that, as far as possible, they should be made to represent different Interests. Under this Reasoning I

[1] His letter to Morris, from which the quotation given above was taken, was written during his residence at Passy, France. See also his letter to Benjamin Vaughan, Passy, March 14, 1785. Franklin (Smyth), IX, 293.

[2] See A. Lawrence Lowell, *Essays on Government*, Chapter IV, pp. 136-188.

would establish a Legislature of two Houses. The Upper should represent the Property; the Lower the Population of the State. The upper should be chosen by Freemen possessing in Lands and Houses one thousand Pounds; the Lower by all such as had resided four Years in the Country, and paid Taxes. The first should be chosen for four, the last for two years. They should in Authority be co-equal." [1]

Descent of Property of Intestates

Franklin's views relative to the proper method of dividing intestates' property among heirs may be found in a letter to Granville Sharp, Passy, July 5, 1785:

"Your writings, which always have some public good for their object, I always read with pleasure. I am perfectly of your opinion, with respect to the Salutory law of gavelkind,[2] and hope it may in time be established throughout America. In six of the States, already, the lands of intestates are divided equally among the children, if all girls; but there is a double share given to the eldest son, for which I see no more reason, than giving such share to the eldest daughter; and think there should be no distinction.

[1] Franklin (Smyth), X, 58.

[2] Gavelkind was the rule of common law which obtained in the shire of Kent, England, from Anglo-Saxon times. According to this rule of law the land of a deceased tenant in fee intestate was divided equally among all the sons, or among brothers, or other collateral heirs on the failure of direct or nearer heirs.

Since my being last in France I have seen several of our eldest sons, spending idly their fortunes by residing in Europe and neglecting their own Country; these are from the Southern States. The Northern young men stay at home, and are industrious, useful citizens; the more equal division of their fathers' fortunes not enabling them to ramble and spend their shares abroad, which is so much the better for their country." [1]

Franklin's Free Trade Resolution in the Second Continental Congress

As a means of bringing Great Britain to terms with the colonists at the beginning of the American Revolution Franklin offered a resolution in the second Continental Congress (July 21, 1775) whereby the ships of other European countries would be permitted to trade in American ports provided these countries allowed American ships to trade in their ports and protected them.[2]

Rights of Neutrals in Time of War

Franklin long believed in the principle that the ships of neutral nations should be unmolested by belligerents in time of war, and that "free ships make free goods." One of his last acts while he was United States' Minister to France was to play a prominent part in negotiating a Treaty of Amity and Commerce

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 357-358.
[2] *Journals of the Continental Congress* (edited by W. C. Ford), II, 200-201.

with Prussia (1786) which guaranteed the observance of this principle.[1]

Franklin's Interest in International Peace

Franklin worked tirelessly to compass the defeat of Great Britain during the American Revolution while he was United States' Minister to France. When the war was over, however, he began to take a deep interest in plans for the establishment of international peace. His belief that war was an economic waste and a dire calamity to humanity is admirably shown in a letter to an old English friend, Sir Joseph Banks:

"I join with you most cordially in rejoicing at the return of Peace. I hope it will be lasting, and that Mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable Creatures, have Reason and Sense enough to settle their Differences without cutting Throats; for, in my opinion, there never was a good War, or a bad Peace. What vast additions to the Conveniences and Comforts of Living might Mankind have acquired, if the Money spent in Wars had been employed in Works of public utility! What an extension of Agriculture, even to the Tops of our Mountains: what Rivers rendered navigable, or joined by Canals: what Bridges, Aqueducts, new Roads, and other Public Works, Edifices, and Improvements, rendering England a compleat Paradise, might have been obtained by spending

[1] Thomas Jefferson and John Adams signed this treaty after Franklin had negotiated it with the Prussian diplomatic representative. The text of the treaty is given in full in the *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, vol. XI, pp. 5-14.

those Millions in doing good, which in the last War have been spent in doing Mischief; in bringing Misery into thousands of Families, and destroying the Lives of so many thousands of working people, who might have performed the useful labour!" [1]

Franklin's interest in plans for international peace is shown by comments on this subject which he made to John Baynes, who visited him at Passy in the fall of 1783, and which are noted in the latter's *Journal* under the date, September 23, 1783.[2] Baynes quotes Franklin as saying that international peace might be established in Europe after one hundred and fifty or two hundred years if the nations agreed to ally against aggressors and to submit their disputes to disinterested third parties.

Baynes also states in his *Journal* that Franklin informed him that during the previous year (1782) he had printed a project for universal and perpetual peace which had been written and submitted to him by a poor man who had walked to Passy from one of the remotest provinces of France. This person was one Pierre André Gargaz, who had completed a sentence of twenty years as a galley slave as the result of a proceeding which was taken against him on the charge of assassination. Franklin was impressed with the merits of Gargaz's *Project* and printed a number of copies on his private press at Passy under the title, *Conciliateur de Toutes les Nations d'Europe, ou*

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 74.

[2] Part of Baynes' *Journal* is printed in John Bigelow's edition of *The Complete Works of Benjamin Franklin*, VIII, 410-425.

Projet de Paix perpétuelle entre tous les Souverains de l'Europe & leurs Voisins. Gargaz's *Project* seems to have attracted very little attention and to have had no influence in promoting a movement for international peace.[1]

Frédéric Bastiat

Franklin's writings exerted a great influence on the French economist, Frédéric Bastiat (1801-1850). In a letter to his schoolfellow, Felix Coudroy, April 9, 1827, Bastiat tells how he accidentally discovered a small volume of Franklin's miscellaneous articles at Bordeaux and what a profound impression the book made on him. In his youthful enthusiasm he assured his friend that he had resolved to become as good and virtuous as Franklin.[2] Throughout life, indeed, he did painstakingly imitate Franklin in his manner of living and even in dress.[3] In speaking of the latter's influence on Bastiat's literary style and his method of presenting economic theories to the masses, his biographer, Ronce, who calls him "*le Bonhomme Richard de la science économique française*," says, ". . . le ton simple et familier qu'il affectionait, la tournoure d'esprit empreinte de bonhomie dont il

[1] This work together with an English translation and an introduction by George Simpson Eddy, has been reprinted under the title, *A Project of Universal and Perpetual Peace* (New York, 1922). Mr. Eddy discovered two copies of Franklin's imprint of Gargaz's *Project* at the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania among a collection of pamphlets once owned by Franklin.

[2] Hermann von Lessen, *Frédéric Bastiat, sein Leben, seine freihändlerischen Bestrebungen und Sozialökonomischen Anschauungen*, p. 3.

[3] G. de Molinari, *Frédéric Bastiat. Journal des Economistes*, February, 1851. Vol. 18, p. 186.

usait, quand il voulait instruire les masses, il les prit, sans conteste, à Benjamin Franklin." [1]

Franklin's Influence on the Philosophy of American Business

In commenting on Franklin's mastery of the art of propaganda and his use of it in moulding public opinion, Dr. Friedrich Schönemann, an acute German critic, makes the following observation relative to Franklin's influence on the development of the philosophy of American business:

"Through his great practical mastery of life Benjamin Franklin has become the father of the shrewd Yankee as we find him in innumerable examples in life and also in American literature. His moral transmutation of economic life in its entirety, especially, has, in the course of time, become increasingly more symbolic for America and her business man. The whole American philosophy of business traces its origin to this consistently successful son of Mercury." [2]

The German sociologist, Max Weber, has also shown [3] that Franklin, in such writings as *Hints for those that would be Rich* (1736) [4] and *Advice to a*

[1] P. Ronce, *Frédéric Bastiat, sa Vie, son Oeuvre*, p. 145. It is interesting to note that Franklin produced much the same impression on the great French positive philosopher, Auguste Comte (1798-1857), in youth, as he did on Bastiat. Franklin, however, does not seem to have affected Comte's sociological and economic thought to any appreciable degree. See Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy*, pp. 381-382; also John Morley, article on Comte in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th Edition, VI, 815.

[2] Friedrich Schönemann, *Die Kunst der Massenbeeinflussung in den Vereinigten staaten von Amerika*, p. 157.

[3] *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I, 31-41 and notes.

[4] From "*Poor Richard*," 1737. Franklin (Smyth), II, 211-212.

Young Tradesman (1748),[1] gave a perfect expression of the utilitarian ethics and the modern capitalistic spirit that was latent in New England Protestantism.

Franklin's Advocacy of Industry and Frugality

Franklin believed that material well-being was a prerequisite of human happiness, an essential condition precedent to the acquisition of happiness and virtue. Throughout his life, in oral counsels, in letters and in his published writings, he preached the necessity of acquiring habits of industry and frugality.

He compiled and published his famous *Poor Richard's Almanack* for a quarter of a century (1733-1758), selling about ten thousand copies annually. The desire to enrich himself was undoubtedly the primary motive which induced him to publish his almanac, but he derived great satisfaction from the belief that its proverbs served to inculcate habits of greater thrift and frugality in those who read it. Using the best of the proverbs which appeared in earlier almanacs he composed a connected discourse, *Father Abraham's Speech,* better known as the *Way to Wealth,* which appeared in the almanac of 1758.[2] Writing in his *Autobiography* (1788) he thus described its influence in his lifetime:

[1] Franklin (Smyth), II, 370-372.

[2] It is interesting to notice that Du Pont de Nemours in his treatise, *On National Education in the United States of America,* pp. 33-34, which was written in 1800 at the request of Thomas Jefferson, advocated the inclusion of *The Way to Wealth* in an A B C text book for children of primary schools.

"The piece, being universally approved, was copied in all the newspapers of the Continent; reprinted in Britain on a broad side, to be stuck up in houses; two translations were made of it in French, and great numbers bought by the clergy and gentry, to distribute gratis among their poor parishioners and tenants. In Pennsylvania, as it discouraged useless expense in foreign superfluities, some thought it had its share of influence in producing that growing plenty of money which was observable for several years after its publication." [1]

The *Way to Wealth* has been the most popular and the most widely read of all Franklin's writings. It has been published in most of the written languages of the world and has, at the present time (1928), passed through about one thousand editions in the English and about three hundred in foreign languages. "Poor Richard's" proverbs have probably gained a wider currency than those of any other writer. The extent to which they have served to guide or to influence human conduct is a debatable question. They may have exerted some influence to promote industry and frugality in Franklin's time when people had comparatively little to read; but to-day they probably only amuse and have lost whatever potency of influence they formerly possessed.[2]

[1] Franklin (Smyth), I, 343.

[2] One of the most curious of Franklin's projects for saving was an article, entitled *Economie*, which he contributed to the *Journal de Paris* (No. 117, April 26, 1784). In this he advocated "daylight saving" and calculated that if the Parisians arose at sunrise they might save 96,075,000 *livres tournois* in expenditures for candles in the six months from March 20 to September 20. See Franklin (Smyth), IX, 183-189.

The English Laboring Poor

In an article, *On the Price of Corn, and Management of the Poor* (1766),[1] Franklin argued that the English Corn Laws, which forbade the exportation of grain when the price was high in England, operated as "a partial tax" on English farmers for the support of the poor. He was opposed to the economic principles on which the Corn Laws were based, and believed that they were chiefly beneficial to the manufacturers, who desired to keep down the cost of subsistence which wages were then merely supposed to cover. He stated that the laboring classes depended on these laws to supply them with cheap food, and on account of this habit of dependence they had become "more idle, dissolute, drunken and insolent." "I am for doing good to the poor," he wrote, "but I differ in opinion about the means. I think the best way of doing good to the poor, is, not making them easy *in* poverty, but leading them or driving them *out* of it."

In the same spirit he directed an attack on the English Poor Laws in a paper, *On the Labouring Poor*,[2] which he contributed to *The Gentleman's Magazine* (April, 1768).[3] In this he asserted that these laws, made by the English propertied classes (who had the right to vote and who were members of Parliament), operated as a tax on their estates. In defense of the rich and property-holding class he said, "Much

[1] Franklin (Smyth), V, 534-539.
[2] Ibid., V, 122-127.
[3] See *The Gentleman's Magazine, and Historical Chronicle*, XXXVIII (1768), 156-157. This article was signed "Medius."

malignant censure have some writers bestowed upon the rich for their luxury and expensive living, while the poor are starving, &c; not considering that what the rich expend, the labouring poor receive in payment for their labour. It may seem a paradox if I should assert that our labouring poor do in every year receive *the whole revenue of the nation;* I mean not only the public revenue, but also the revenue or clear income of all private estates, or a sum equivalent to the whole."

In support of this conclusion he reasoned that on the average all private incomes as well as the public revenue was annually spent for goods that the working classes produced and in the production of which they were kept employed. A law to enhance wages, he thought, would cause a rise in the prices of manufactured goods and a consequent diminution of the sale of these goods abroad which would result in unemployment in England. Since, too, all incomes were spent annually there was no fund available from which higher wages might be paid. In Franklin's opinion the best remedy for the poverty of the English workers was for them to work six days a week and to refrain from spending their earnings in alehouses on Sundays.

Franklin's paper, *On the Labouring Poor,* is open to criticism from point of fact as well as from the viewpoint of modern economic theory. As a matter of fact under the Elizabethan poor law (43 Eliz. cap. 2), which was in force when Franklin wrote his paper, all the inhabitants in a parish, the rich as well

as the relatively poor, were taxed for the support of the indigent poor. The total sum expended by the class which Franklin calls "the rich" could not have been as great as that spent by the relatively large class which he designates as "the labouring poor." Furthermore, if, as he stated, the whole annual income of the English nation was spent, then England had ceased to accumulate wealth. We know that this was not the case. Moreover, he erroneously thought that a demand for commodities necessarily implied a demand for labor, whereas we now know that a demand for commodities and a demand for labor are not identical.

The reasoning in this paper may have been largely original with Franklin. It is interesting, however, to observe that in some respects it is quite similar to that of certain passages of Bernard de Mandeville's (1670-1773) paradoxical *Fable of the Bees* (1714); that Franklin met Mandeville at London on his first visit to England (1724-1726), and that he mentions *The Fable of the Bees* in the first portion of his *Autobiography* (written in 1771), although he does not say that he read it.[1] One must observe that the view that spending and luxurious living made trade brisk and stimulated production, thus giving employment to the laboring class (a view which Mandeville several times expressed in *The Fable of the Bees*),[2] was also

[1] Franklin (Smyth), I, 278.

[2] See Bernard de Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees or; Private Vices, Public Benefits* (London, 1755, 9th edition), I, 79-104, and the passages of the poem marked "I" and "K."

a widely accepted, erroneous, popular notion in the eighteenth century.

In a letter to Benjamin Vaughan, Passy, July 26, 1784, Franklin again expressed the opinion that foolish expenditures and luxurious living, although private vices, were public benefits. In this letter and in numerous passages of his writings, however, he condemned the practice of purchasing foreign luxuries and "superfluities" (a view frequently expressed by writers of the Mercantilist school), which he insisted resulted in the impoverishment of a nation. He also believed that the desire for luxuries, such as could be made at home or within a country by the people of that country, was a commendable folly because it spurred them on to greater activity in production.[1]

Wages. Length of the Working Day. Immigration

In accordance with the views of the Physiocrats and most of the other economists of the eighteenth century, Franklin thought that the wages then paid to laborers were generally only sufficient to enable them and their families to procure means of subsistence. He believed that wages would be low when there was a large supply of laborers and a relatively small demand for their services. Under such conditions, in his opinion, the tendency of laborers to underbid each other in order to obtain employment was another factor which resulted in the lowering

[1] Franklin (Smyth), IX, 240-248.

of wages. In his article *On the Labouring Poor* (1768) he wrote:

"If it be said that their wages are too low, and that they ought to be better paid for their labour, I heartily wish any means could be fallen upon to do it, consistent with their interest and happiness; but, as the cheapness of other things is owing to the plenty of those things, so the cheapness of labour is in most cases owing to the multitude of labourers,[1] and to their under-working one another in order to obtain employment." [2]

According to the schedule which Franklin used for the employment of his time it appears that he was in the habit of working eight hours a day in his printing establishment at Philadelphia.[3] In a letter to Benjamin Vaughan, Passy, July 26, 1784, he wrote, "It has been computed by some Political Arithmetician, that, if every Man and Woman would work four Hours each Day on something useful, that Labour would produce sufficient to procure all the Necessaries and Comforts of Life, Want and Misery would be banished out of the World, and the rest of the 24 hours might be Leisure and Pleasure." [4]

Franklin's *Information to those who would remove to America* (1782?),[5] a paper written as a general answer to the numerous inquiries of Europeans rela-

[1] Karl Marx read Franklin's economic writings before 1865. Compare Franklin's statement relative to the "law" governing the rate of wages with Marx's *Value, Price and Profit* (1865), pp. 120-121.

[2] Franklin (Smyth), V, 126.

[3] Ibid., I, 332-333.

[4] Ibid., IX, 246.

[5] Ibid., IX, 183-189.

tive to the economic advantages offered by the United States, was translated into many European languages and undoubtedly prompted many poor European laborers to emigrate to America.

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Appendix

No. 57

THIS *Instrument or Policy witnesseth,* That *John Potts* having become, and by these Presents becoming a Member of the *Philadelphia Contributionship,* for insuring Houses, &c. from Loss by Fire within the City of *Philadelphia,* and ten Miles round the same, in *Pennsylvania,* pursuant to a Deed of Settlement, bearing Date the *25th* Day of *March* 1752. And for and in Consideration of the Sum of *Five Pounds* in Hand paid by the said *John Potts* to the Treasurer of the said Contributionship, being the Consideration for insuring the Sum of *Five Hundred Pounds* unto the said *John Potts,* his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, upon *his House situate on the East side of King Street where formerly Peter Bards being 28 foot front & 40 foot back. Commencing the 18th of July 1759: being the Termination of the former policy* during the Term of Seven Years from the Date hereof: Which said Sum of *Five Pounds* is hereby declared to be deposited by the said *John Potts* as a Pledge or Caution for the Performance of the Agreements comprised in the said Deed of Settlement on h*is* Part from hence forth to be performed. Now we the Directors of the said Contributionship, for and in Consideration thereof, do hereby order, direct and appoint the Treasurer for the Time being of the said Contributionship, according to the said Deed of Settlement, to pay and satisfy unto the said *John Potts* his Executors, Administrators, or Assigns, the Sum of *Five Hundred Pounds,* at the End of three Months next after the said *House* shall be burnt down or demolished by or by Reason or Means of Fire; and in like Manner shall pay the Sum of *Five Hundred Pounds,* so often as any *House* of the same Value and Goodness, built in the Room thereof, shall be burnt down or demolished by Reason or Means of Fire, during the Time this Policy remains in Force, and thereupon to endorse each and every such Payment on this present Policy. AND ALSO, That We the Directors aforesaid, do hereby further

order, direct and appoint, that when, and so often as the said *House* or any *House* built in the Room thereof, shall happen to be damnified or injured by or by Means of Fire; such Damages shall be made good, according to the Estimate thereof, or repaired and put into as good Condition as the same was or were before such Fire or Fires happening. And we likewise order and direct the said Treasurer for the Time being of the said Contributionship, at the End of the said Term of Seven Years, to repay unto the said *John Potts* his Executors, Administrators or Assigns, the said Money so deposited as aforesaid, or so much thereof shall not in the mean Time be applied towards Losses, and the unavoidable Expence of the said Insurance Office, pursuant to the said Deed of Settlement.

PROVIDED, and it is hereby declared and agreed, That if the said Deposit Money shall not be demanded at this Insurance Office within the Space of one Year next after the Expiration of the said Term of Seven Years, then the Payment thereof shall cease, and the same shall be sunk and remain to the Benefit of the said Contributionship.

PROVIDED ALSO, That if it should so happen, that the whole Stock of the said Contributionship should ever be insufficient fully to pay and discharge all the Losses sustained by the Members of this Contributionship, in such Case a just Average shall be made, and the Payment to be demanded in Virtue of this Policy shall be a Dividend of the said Stock, in Proportion to the Sum insured, agreeable to the Tenor and true Intent of the said Deed of Settlement.

IN WITNESS whereof, We have hereunto set our Hands and Seals, this *Seventh* Day of *July* in the Year of the Reign of King GEORGE the Third. *Annoq; Dom.* 1764.

Sealed and delivered in the Presence of us

Josiah Hill	*Peter Reeves*	(SEAL)
Robt. Owen		
	Jacob Shoemaker Junr.	(SEAL)
	David Deshler	(SEAL)

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